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Hafa Adai!

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Bigger, expanded DOD medical mission next year

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Maj. Daniel LaVorgna, extreme left, Innovative Readiness Training program manager for the U.S. Army active duty and reserve, talks about the completion of this year's medical mission and next year's expanded medical mission for the CNMI, during a press briefing in the Office of the Governor's conference room yesterday afternoon. Also in the photo are U.S. Army Col. George Koklanaris, center, who is the deputy director for IRT, and Lt. Commander Shaun Shillady of the Navy Reserve Forces Command in Virginia.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training will have a bigger, expanded medical mission in the CNMI next year.

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Sagana found guilty; will appeal

LEIGH GASES

Bonifacio "Boni" V. Sagana, left, is seen escorted out of the U.S. District Court of the NMI yesterday afternoon by attorney Richard Miller's co-counsel, David Banes, after he was found guilty by a 12-person jury of conspiracy to unlawfully produce an identification document .

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

After four hours of deliberation yesterday in the U.S. District Court for the NMI, the 12-person jury in the case against Bonifacio "Boni" V. Sagana unanimously found him guilty of conspiring with Bernadita Zata to illegally produce a CNMI driver's license. His lawyer said they intend to appeal.

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Critical habitat eyed in Marianas for *haggan* and green sea turtles

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service are proposing the creation of critical habitat for *haggan* and *wong mool* (green sea turtles) within the Mariana archipelago.

The plan is part of a larger proposal announced yesterday to designate new areas of critical habitat to protect threatened and endangered green sea turtles. These agencies share jurisdiction for sea turtles, with the Fish and Wildlife Service overseeing their protection and recovery on nesting beaches and NOAA Fisheries providing oversight in the marine environment.

In the Mariana archipelago, *haggan* and *wong mool* are

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'Palacios' budget overstates revenues by $9.1M'

DeLeon Guerrero

» DeLeon Guerrero to Norita: Show bank reconciliation report to validate $24M ARPA cash

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The concurrent resolution that the Senate is now reviewing after its recent passage in House of Representatives shows an embedded $9.1 million in Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' fiscal year 2024 budget submission that essentially overstates the projected revenues for fiscal year 2024.

That's according to Senate president Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan), who also stated that her office requested Department of Finance

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'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:
72

INSIDE

NATION
A dangerous 19th straight day of scorching heat in Phoenix set a record for U.S. cities.
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ENVIRONMENT
A new report details the climate change risks facing the Federated States of Micronesia.
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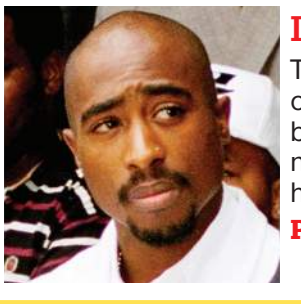

LIFE & STYLE
The unsolved killing of Tupac Shakur is back in the spotlight nearly 30 years after his death.
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Local

Castro: Court prohibited from commenting on Flores' request

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro said the court is prohibited from publicly commenting on Rep. Marissa Renee Flores' (Ind-Saipan) request for recused judges of former governor Ralph DLG Torres' case.

Castro

In a letter to Flores dated yesterday, July 19, 2023, Castro said: "Due to a recently filed petition for writs of prohibition and mandamus regarding recusal, the court is prohibited from commenting on the subject pursuant to the Code of Judicial Conduct for the Commonwealth Judiciary."

He added, "Please be informed the trial and appellate courts cannot make any public statement on published orders and opinions or issues that are likely to come before the court."

Flores, in a letter to both Castro and Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto Naraja dated July 17, 2023, requested that all CNMI Superior Court judges disclose their specific reasons for recusing themselves from hearing the suit that former governor Ralph DLG Torres filed against the Department of Finance and Office of the Attorney General that questioned the hiring contract of special prosecutor James Kingman.

Specifically, Flores said that CNMI law may allow judges and justices to recuse themselves without citing any reason but these recusals "incur substantial delay in significant cases and prevent the public from having cases heard by local elected officials."

Saipan Tribune archives show that Naraja and associate judges Joseph N. Camacho, Teresa Kim-Tenorio, Kenneth Govendo, and Wesley Bogdan have all recused themselves from hearing Torres' suit.

With this, Torres' petition is left without a local judge to hear it. This means that, like Torres' ongoing criminal case, the CNMI Supreme Court will have to appoint a non-CNMI judge to hear the matter.

NMC graduate now a Nursing Unit manager at CHCC

Northern Marianas College alumna Maria Atrero is now the new Medical-Surgical Nursing Unit Manager at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.
NMC

Joining thousands of Northern Marianas College graduates who are taking on leadership positions in the community, NMC graduate Maria Atrero was recently promoted to the position of Medical-Surgical Nursing Unit Manager at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

In her new post, Atrero assumes a pivotal role in overseeing the management of both the medical and surgical units. Her responsibilities include the supervision of a dedicated team of 54 staff members, which includes unit clerks, tele-techs, certified nursing assistants, and registered nurses.

Beyond managing day-to-day operations, Atrero's duties extend to tasks such as ensuring an adequate stock of essential items for patient care and developing and updating policies to align with the latest practices. Most importantly, she recognizes the crucial task of safeguarding not only the well-being of patients but also the nurses under her care.

Atrero embarked on her nursing journey after graduating from NMC in 2017. She stated that NMC played a pivotal role in jump-starting her nursing career, providing her with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in her field.

"My journey at NMC has been instrumental in shaping me into the nurse and leader I am today," Atrero said. "With the support and guidance of NMC, I have gained the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to the CNMI community."

Atrero emphasized with NMC students who aspire to become nurses the selfless nature of the profession, urging students to persevere through the challenges they may encounter along the way.

"The journey is hard but if others can do it, then so can you," Atrero said. "And if things start to get hard, remember that there will be good days, and eventually that hard work and those bad days will pay off and make you a stronger person."

NMC says iy takes great pride in Atrero's outstanding accomplishments.

"We are immensely proud of Maria Atrero's recent promotion to the position of Medical-Surgical Nursing Unit Manager," NMC Nursing Department chair Rosa Aldan said. "It is truly gratifying to witness the remarkable achievements of our alumni. Maria's success is a testament to the exceptional education and training provided by NMC. Her dedication, perseverance, and commitment to excellence reflect the values we instill in our students. Her promotion serves as an inspiration to current and future NMC nursing students, demonstrating the boundless possibilities that await them in their nursing careers." ***(PR)***

Children's playground in the works in Chalan Kanoa

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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CORRESPONDENT

The Saipan Municipal Council is looking at building a children's playground for Chalan Kanoa residents, according to William Torres in a presentation last Tuesday during the Rotary Club of Saipan's weekly meeting at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

As plans are being made and positioned, Torres shared how they desired to serve the children of CK, as it is not only holds a large number of residents, but also in some ways is a really "underserved area."

Aside from the smaller and weathered playgrounds in the Laly 4 beachside area of Chalan Kanoa, there are no playgrounds for children within the main villages, and Torres said the council had been working on changing that.

The idea is to build a park that would not only accommodate child's play, but would also be a free WiFi zone where children can access the internet for homework. He said they are already working with IT&E on that, and also noted that they are working with the CNMI Office of Grants Management and State clearinghouse and the Governor's Office to make the area, as well as the Kiosku courtyard near the U.S. Postal Service, a completely solar-powered area.

As of now, the council has two location options, Torres said. The first option is the empty jungle lot directly adjacent to the Kiosku parking lot. According to Torres, this area is currently privately owned.

If that first option doesn't work out, the fallback plan is to locate the playground on the sire of the old council office, once it has been rebuilt to the newer modern version next year.

He shared that the playground will be fenced for safety since it is near the road. When a Rotarian asked if it were better to build the playground near the beach, Torres replied that the idea of building the playground away from beaches is around the thought of protecting children from exposure to some, if any, irresponsible adult behavior cause by drinking, smoking, etc. He also mentioned how the area would also be convenient since the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority recently decided to add a station in that area, therefore children will have transportation from school and back home. "The municipal council has really focused on… providing this kind of facility to the children of Chalan Kanoa, who practically don't have any kind of these facilities after school," he added.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Officer and directors of the Rotary Club of Saipan pose with guest speaker William Torres from the Saipan Municipal Council and his colleagues from the council after Torres' presentation last Tueday at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

Camacho: I want the money back

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho said that he wants to know who the expenditure authority was in the $98,137.14 that was taken from his municipal account, and insists that he wants the money back.

Camacho

He maintains that he did not signed off on the payments and wants to know who signed off on it—or if it was a mistake. In any case, Camacho wants to get the funds back because he said that money is not his, but for the people of Saipan.

The funds are lump sum payments for the accrued annual leave of former and current municipal employees.

Camacho said that the issue is now being investigated by the Office of the Public Auditor.

"I'm interested to see the result of the investigation—who authorized it and, if they used my signature, I want to ask for further investigation. If it is necessary for me to file criminal charges, I'll file it because this is not my money," he said.

Camacho said if he were to sign off on it, "it won't be a select handful of staff. If we're going to do that, then let's do that for everyone who has the same number of annual leaves. But it shows it's not all the employees—just a few. So that would never be authorized under my direction because I will not allow it."

Camacho said it is not fair for his other staff as they now have low morale because of the payments received by a select group of employees.

Camacho pointed out that the CNMI government's finances are down. "Government employees under the Executive Branch are in austerity; 500 ARPA funds employees were released. So, I'm not that stupid to release those funding, knowing that the CNMI government is under financial constraints."

Earlier, Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita said in a budget hearing that the payouts made were a matter of timing and are authorized and legal.

The Saipan Mayor 's Office discovered the payouts when they were reviewing payroll and

See CAMACHO on Page 4

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Yellowfin
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1st Place - $1,000
2nd Place - $750
3rd Place - $500
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Tan Siu Lin Foundation
1st Place - $1,000
2nd Place - $750
3rd Place - $500
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Torres Brothers, LLC
1st Place - $750
2nd Place - $500
3rd Place - $250

One hurt in shooting incident in Chalan Laulau

The Department of Public Safety reported last night that one person was brought to the Commonwealth Health Center yesterday evening after being shot.

The DPS report stated that the victim is in stable condition. The report did not indicate the victim's gender.

It stated that DPS 911 dispatch received a call of a shooting incident at a residence in Chalan LauLau yesterday evening. "Currently, officers are actively searching for the suspect in the area," it added.

It gave no further details but said DPS will provide further updates. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

CRITICAL

From page 1

listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act as they face threats from habitat loss and climate change. The designation of critical habitat is a conservation tool to guide cooperation within the federal government and inform landowners and the public of areas that are important to a species' conservation and recovery.

Within the island of Guam, approximately 125 acres of federal, territorial, private, and uncategorized lands are proposed as critical habitat for nesting haggan and wong mool.

In the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, approximately 180 acres of commonwealth, private, and uncategorized lands are proposed as critical habitat for nesting haggan and wong mool on the islands of Agrihan, Pagan, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

The proposed rule will be available for a 90-day public comment period and a virtual joint-public meeting will be hosted by the Service and NOAA.

For more information on the proposed critical habitat or public meeting, visit: https://www.fws.gov/project/green-sea-turtle-critical-habitat-pacific-islands

Yesterday's announcement said that both the Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries listed the green sea turtle under the Endangered Species Act in 1978 and that this new proposal reflects a discrete update consistent with obligations under the ESA.

"Designating critical habitat for green sea turtles will help us effectively carry out our mission of protecting and recovering the species," said assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Shannon Estenoz. "Endangered Species Act protections are benefiting the species by raising awareness about its threats, inspiring diverse partnerships on its behalf, and now helping conserve habitat critical to its conservation and recovery."

The Fish and Wildlife Service proposes designating 8,870 acres (approximately 35,896 square kilometers) of critical habitat on land where green sea turtles bask, nest, incubate, hatch and travel to the sea. NOAA Fisheries proposes to designate marine critical habitat from the mean high water to 20 meters depth to protect access to nesting beaches, migratory corridors and important feeding and resting areas; it also includes Sargassum habitat in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean.

"Green sea turtles continue to face threats in the marine environment, including human interactions like bycatch and marine debris, as well as habitat loss and the ongoing impacts of climate change," said NOAA Fisheries assistant administrator Janet Coit. "These new critical habitat proposals will aid in our joint mission to protect and recover endangered and threatened green sea turtles."

The proposed critical habitat areas include the states of California, Florida, Hawai'i, North Carolina and Texas; the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands; and the commonwealths of the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

SAGANA

From page 1

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona set the sentencing on Friday, Nov. 24, 2023, at 9am. The final pre-sentence investigation report is due no later than Nov. 10, 2023. In the meantime, Sagana remains free on bail.

After the guilty verdict was read, the jury was individually polled and everyone said "guilty." Sagana was charged with conspiracy to unlawfully produce an identification document—a CNMI diver's license.

As they were leaving the courthouse, defense counsel Richard Miller spoke briefly, saying, "We respected the hard work that the jury did and we will certainly be filing an appeal."

Both the prosecutor, assistant U.S. Attorney Albert Flores Jr., and Miller made their closing arguments yesterday morning before the verdict. The jury began their deliberations after their lunch recess yesterday afternoon.

In his closing arguments, Flores urged the jury to find the defendant guilty , saying the three elements of the case had been met.

Flores said that for element 1, Zata and Sagana formed an agreement to get Zata a license, therefore Sagana knowingly produced the license when Zata paid him and went to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to submit the application. For element 2, Zata had no proper immigration documentation to legally obtain a license; and for element 3, the production of the document was in or affected interstate or foreign commerce because the license was made from parts outside of the CNMI, the car Zata used was made outside of the CNMI, and the gasoline was imported from outside the CNMI as well.

Flores also recapped the evidence presented in the past couple days of the trial, along with the witnesses and their testimonies.

The prosecutions' witnesses were Homeland Security Investigations special agent David West, HSI special agent Fredric Jonas, former deputy CNMI Marshal Eric Esteves, and Zata, Diosdado Garcia, and Nora Ayuyu.

The defense' witnesses were Joycie Estabillo and Adrian Ranin—both of whom are friends of Sagana and were assisted by Sagana on occasion with their immigration documents.

Flores pointed out that Sagana himself could not get his story straight. Sagana's story changed from his initial statement to his signed sworn statement: first Sagana said he just brought people to the BMV, but said he did not in his written statement; and that he said no one paid him for the license, but that Zata and Garcia said they did.

Flores also pointed out Sagana's I-94 immigration documents found in his home during an initial search last March 8, 2021. Zata and Garcia both did not give Sagana an I-94 document and Flores said that Sagana could have faked the I-94 documents when he submitted Zata's and Garcia's driver license application to the BMV. Both Zata and Garcia's I-94 documents had the same unique stamp from Sagana's own I-94, with other identification numbers altered.

In Miller's closing arguments, he led with Sagana having "nothing to hide."

During Sagana's home search by HSI and, although it was not in the search warrant, Sagana told agents that they could search his cars and his other home in Chalan Piao and even waived his Miranda rights.

Miller added that Zata, in her testimony said, "I just do what my lawyer tells me to do." Zata also did not initially answer investigators' questions because she was worried about being deported.

Zata then pleaded guilty to the charge of conspiracy to unlawfully produce an identification document in 2021 and implicated Sagana, after which received some benefits, such as an employment authorization document, no deportation, and a driver's license.

As for Zata's and Garcia's "fake" I-94, Miller said the search came up empty for computers or devices that could be used to make the document and that there were no internet searches found either on how to make fake ones.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

BIGGER

From page 1

Maj. Daniel LaVorgna, who is the Innovative Readiness Training program manager for the U.S. Army, disclosed in a news briefing yesterday in the Office of the Governor's conference room that they already have an approved military application for medical mission for next year.

The IRT's successful Wellness CNMI mission this year ended yesterday.

LaVorgna said they will be bringing back the same major supporting command and another brigade to lead it.

"What would be different is we will expand it to include a full month of services," he said.

Because there's a lot of costs and a lot of planning involved, they would like to get a little bit more return on that investment by lengthening the duration of the project, LaVorgna said.

He said they will also be adding an Air Force Reserve component in that mission next year.

For this year, LaVorgna said, the Air National Guard comprised the largest number after the Army Reserve, three from the Navy, and one active duty Army soldier that was part of that same team.

This mission has been a great training opportunity for their people, LaVorgna said. From a training perspective, he said this IRT mission for the participating units were estimated at about 12,800 hours of training.

"IRT is a training program, where we bring in service members to come in and work in their occupational specialty and provide services to the community," he said.

For the benefits to the community, he said they're estimating somewhere in the ballpark of $2.6 million to $2.8 million based on fair market value in the civilian sector.

"If you base it on Medicare reimbursement, it'd be more like about $1.3 million $1.6 million. So for the CNMI community, it's of course a nice benefit to have those services at no cost," LaVorgna said.

U.S. Army Col. George Koklanaris, who is the deputy director for IRT, said one of the key things he wants everyone in the CNMI to know is that they are indeed looking to expand their services next year.

"We get a lot of our feedback directly from the community itself, the number of patients that we're able to see, the number of animals that we're able to treat with our veterinary services, as well as our relationships that we built with the government of [the] CNMI and the various officials within the government. [This] give us a good idea as to what types of services are needed, and the length of time that we need to be here," he said.

Koklanaris said they are looking to expand not just their services in fiscal year 2024, but also lengthening the number of days that they will be here on the ground.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

BUDGET

From page 1

Secretary Tracy B. Norita last Tuesday to provide a bank reconciliation report that will help validate that there is $24 million American Rescue Plan Act cash in the bank that Norita stated at the hearing for the Department of Finance budget for 2024.

"This particular matter of concern is an ongoing discussion," said DeLeon Guerrero Tuesday in response to *Saipan Tribune*'s request for comments about the administration's proposal to increase the Business Gross Revenue Tax in fiscal year 2024 to raise $9.1 million.

DeLeon Guerrero informed Norita and Legislative Bureau fiscal analyst Dave Demapan that her request for a bank reconciliation report will help senators address the legislative actions being considered regarding the fiscal year 2024 budget amount.

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), on the other hand, said Tuesday that they need to amend the concurrent resolution to reflect a budget ceiling without the $9.1 million, unless they introduce a revenue bill to actually collect that amount.

Norita told the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee's Fiscal Year 2024 budget hearing last Friday that Palacios' proposed budget for the government's operations includes a proposal to increase BGRT beginning in the second quarter of fiscal year 2024 for an additional estimated revenue of $9.1 million.

CAMACHO

From page 3

learned that a current employee got an annual leave buyout. The payouts were disbursed on May 19, 2023, May 27, 2023, June 2, 2023, June 14, 2023, and June 28, 2023. Upon discovery, the MOS office reported the missing funds to the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Public Auditor, the governor, and the Finance secretary.

Camacho also wants to make it clear that he does not believe that Apatang, who is the former Saipan mayor, has anything to do with the issue.

"All I'm complaining about is the disbursement. I have nothing against Apatang. I don't want to build a bad reputation with Apatang. We're all elected by the people and we have our own mission to work on. I will stand on my feet to perform my duties and responsibilities to serve the people," he added.

In related news, a letter dated May 5, 2023, from deputy attorney general Lilian Ada to Apatang, who was then the acting governor, she said, "I have been asked by your office to review §CMC 82604 and whether it applies to municipal employees who have received a lump sum payment after leaving the employ of the mayor's office." The short answer is "no."

According to § CMC 82604, "No person shall be re-employed with the Commonwealth government until a period equal to the period of annual leave paid in lump sum has elapsed, except that a person re-employed may, consistent with CNMI regulations, elect to repay an amount equivalent to the non-elapsed annual leave period paid in lump sum upon re-employment with the Commonwealth."

'It would be a mistake to take these relationships for granted'

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The House Committee on Natural Resources Indo-Pacific Task Force held an oversight hearing yesterday on the Biden administration's proposed Compact of Free Association amendments. Task force chair Amata Radewagen (R-American Samoa) and co-chair Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) released the following statements in response:

Radewagen

"The Compact with our free association partners is a national security and foreign policy success story. The Chinese Communist Party dictatorship has pursued a model in which they challenge U.S. leadership by attempting to leverage the FAS through systematic political warfare, economic disruption, corruption, and coercion," Radawagen said. "We have a duty to protect the interests of Americans and island peoples alike by reauthorizing these Compact agreements. While there is much work that remains to be done before the administration's proposal is ready, I stand prepared to work with our partners at this time of great importance in the Pacific."

"The United States has close and longstanding relationships with the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands," Sablan said. "But it would be a mistake to take these relationships for granted, especially at a time when China seeks to dominate the Western Pacific. Congress and the Freely Associated States must work together to finalize 20-year extensions of our Compact agreements and send them to the President for his signature without delay."

About

The United States has international agreements known as Compacts of Free Association with three Pacific Island countries: the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia, referred to collectively as the Freely Associated States. The COFA for the RMI and the FSM expire at the end of fiscal year 2023 and the end of fiscal year 2024 for Palau.

In order to deter the People's Republic of China's influence and to maintain the United States' capacity to secure its interests, the U.S. must remain engaged with the FAS, and the Indo-Pacific region as a whole, and respond to malign PRC coercive activity. The COFA are critical to U.S. relationships with the FAS and for U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific.

Yesterday's hearing was an opportunity for the bipartisan task force to hear from representatives from the departments of State, the Interior, and Defense, as well as representatives of FAS governments, and begin deliberation on the Biden administration's proposed Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2023. ***(PR)***

Tinian ranchers in talks with SBDC, IEDC on agri co-op

Tinian ranchers recently had a chance to discuss agri-industry initiatives with members of the CNMI Small Business Development Center at the Northern Marianas College and the International Economic Development Council.

Jose Dela Cruz, president of the Tinian Cattlemen's Association, along with Tinian senators Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian), explored with Tinian SBDC director Benjamin "Huk" Borja and CNMI SBDC network director Nadine C. Deleon Guerrero the feasibility of the Tinian Cattlemen's Association creating a cooperative for all Tinian ranchers and farmers.

Dela Cruz stressed the importance of collaboration if Tinian's end goal is to expand its capacity to export, with Saipan being its initial target market.

"I started my ranch over a decade ago, and I can tell you that if I wanted to expand commercially, I cannot do this alone," Dela Cruz said. "We need our ranchers to come together with the same vested interest in mind—to provide for our islands and to produce enough to make a living out of it."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Clockwise from top. Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian); Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian); Artees Vannett, director of Operations (Grey Snow Management Solutions/IEDC); Jolene Schalper, senior vice president (Great Falls Development Authority/IEDC); Tinian SBDC director Benjamin "Huk" Borja; associate AIF director Britni Beck (Intertribal Agriculture Council/IEDC; Delaney Luna, senior Economic Development associate (IEDC); and Jose Dela Cruz, Tinian Cattlemen's Association president.

Deleon Guerrero emphasized that there must be a connected, positive way for all ranchers and farmers to see the establishment of a cooperative if they want it to succeed.

"I hope the people of Tinian can see that we are here to help and to ensure that no one is making more or less than the other," Deleon Guerrero said. "The goal is to make this beneficial for everyone. But first, we need everyone to come to the table."

The IEDC, in partnership with the CNMI SBDC, will be formulating a plan and developing a cooperative structure that will best suit the needs of Tinian's ranchers and farmers. The TCA may use the information provided to execute the plan, keeping in mind that a feasibility study regarding the establishment of the Tinian slaughterhouse is forthcoming, to help guide even further the TCA in its future ranching and farming operations.

One of the goals and initiatives of the CNMI SBDC network is to provide networks outside of the Commonwealth to ensure local small businesses receive the technical support and guidance they need to achieve their highest potential. It is through partnerships with organizations such as the IEDC that helps connect business communities with resources outside of the CNMI to develop capacity and sustainability.

The IEDC, through collaboration with the CNMI SBDC, met with other agencies throughout the week. At the end of the weeklong meetings, the IEDC will work with the SBDC to create pathways to meet goals and address challenges our local ranchers and farmers are facing in hopes to provide critical access to tools and technical resources.

The CNMI SBDC network promotes a business-friendly economic infrastructure in the community, builds entrepreneurial capacity and financial literacy within that community, and provides current and nascent small businesses with the technical assistance, counseling, training, and support they need to innovate, adapt, and grow.

About

The CNMI SBDC network is composed of the CNMI SBDC lead center on Saipan, the Rota SBDC, and Tinian SBDC. The network is partially funded by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Northern Marianas College.

The IEDC is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization serving economic developers. With more than 4,300 members, IEDC is the largest organization of its kind. ***(PR)***

Job Vacancy Announcement

Technical Operations Manager (Saipan, MP)

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Requirements
Bachelor's Degree; Major(s) and/or field(s) of study in Mechanical Engineering.

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INVITATION TO BID
ITB23-GOV-42300072

SUBMISSION DATE: 9:00 AM ChST, MONDAY, AUGUST 7, 2023

PHASE II – KALABERA CAVE REPAIRS & IMPROVEMENTS

Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lieutenant Governor David M. Apatang, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), is soliciting sealed bids for the ***Phase II Kalabera Cave Repairs & Improvements***, Marpi, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project is funded by the 702 Capital Improvement Project funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **Friday, July 7, 2023** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A **Pre-Bid Conference** will be held at the project site in Marpi, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST, July 21, 2023.**

Questions regarding this ITB may be submitted via email to Ms. Nerissa B. Karakaya at nerissa.benavente@gov.mp no later than **4:30 PM ChST, Thursday, July 28, 2023**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than 10:00 AM ChST, Monday August 7, 2023.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ Arnold I. Palacios
Governor, CNMI

/S/ Brien S. Nicholas Jr., Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

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AMENDED
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2023

Opening date: July 03, 2023 **Closing date: July 21, 2023**

Location:	**SAIPAN**	**SALARY**
Position(s):	(1) Airport Manager	UNGRADED
	(1) ARFF Mechanic II	PL 6/1 to 6/12 ($9.27/hr to $15.85/hr)
	(1) Grants Specialist	PL 15/1 to 15/12 ($14.38/hr to $24.60/hr)
	(1) Master Electrician	PL 19/1 to 19/12 ($17.48/hr to $29.90/hr)
	(1) Procurement Clerk	PL 2/1 to 2/12 ($7.63/hr to $13.04/hr)
Location:	**TINIAN**	**SALARY**
Position(s):	(2) Ports Police/ARFF Trainee	PL 5/1 to 5/12 ($8.83/hr)
Location:	**ROTA**	**SALARY**
Position(s):	(1) Custodial/Maintenance-I	PL 2/1 to 2/12 ($7.63/hr to $13.04/hr)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than ***5:00 P.M. on Friday, July 21, 2023.***

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin, Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

PLAQUE OF RECOGNITION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho presents a plaque of recognition to Mary Ellen Taman, widow of the late Candido "Candy" Babauta Taman, in the presence of Taman's family and Gov. Arnold I. Palacios. Candy Taman was a local music legend and a member of the House of Representatives in the 15th Legislature. Camacho is forever grateful for the efforts of Candy Taman to preserve the Chamorro and Refaluwasch language through song. The mayor also recognizes the public service of Candy Taman during his tenure in the 15th Legislature of the House of Representatives. "His contributions to the community and his wonderful and melodious voice will live on in the spirit of our islands for years to come," said a statement from the Saipan Mayor's Office.

Saipan Troop Store team greets a small island with a big heart

By ROBERT PHILPOT
The ExchangePost.com

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Saipan Troop Store team, from left: Nieves Camacho, customer experience associate; Mayumi Aguon, inventory control associate; Ray Anthony Pangelinan; Edwin Tenorio II, shift manager; Noki Torres, store worker; Josephine Palacios; store manager; Joey Pangelinan, shift manager; Joselito Pena, laborer; Nikissa Lizama, laborer; Juan Kaainoa; and Lillian Diaz, customer experience associate.

Part of the Northern Mariana Islands, Saipan is about 500 miles northeast of Guam, nearly 1,500 miles from Tokyo and about 3,700 miles west of Honolulu. The island is 14 miles long, six miles wide and home to about 50,000 people.

And the Exchange has a Troop Store there. Since 2017, the store, part of the Guam Exchange, has been in a 5,000-square-foot building. But it didn't start that way.

"This store actually started in a container," said Josephine Palacios, the store manager. "Somebody would come in from Guam two or three times a week to open the container for the service members [on] Saipan."

Palacios is on her second stint with the Exchange. She started in 1997, left in 2003, was called back in 2010 and has been with the organization since then. All of her Exchange career has been at the Saipan store, which was still in a container when she started.

"The Exchange decided to hire somebody from Saipan to establish a store here," Palacios said. "It started out opening only a couple of days a week, and then progressed to five days and then seven."

It also expanded—to three containers, totaling about 1,000 square feet.

"Since then, it's been growing," Palacios said of the store. "The number of troops increased. There are also retirees and dependents and Coast Guard members here. We assist with support for Merchant Marine ships. It has really increased over the years."

The U.S. military has a long history on Saipan. American Memorial Park, on the island's west coast, honors U.S. troops who were killed in battles that took place between the U.S. and Japan during World War II. It also honors Chamorros and Carolinian civilians, members of the island's two indigenous groups, who were killed during the battles.

Now the U.S. Army Reserve has a base on the island, and the Army has a recruitment center there. Palacios says the store collaborates well with them and with Theater Support Group-Pacific personnel on the island. Service members also come in from Tinian, another Northern Mariana Island that's accessible to Saipan via plane or ferry.

To meet the growing population, the current store opened after a $2.8-million expansion in 2017, adding a wider variety of merchandise.

"We're like a mini-Exchange," Palacios said. "Along with being a troop store, we carry appliances, like washing machines and refrigerators. With our general manager's help, we launched buy online pickup in store, and that really helped our customers, especially during COVID. Customers have really been grateful for that. It's a remote area, and they don't have to fly over to Guam to go shopping and buy a plane ticket to come back."

During a visit there this year, Air Force Col. Jason Beck, the Exchange's Pacific Region commander, and Army Sgt. Major Generose Green, Pacific Region senior enlisted advisor, were impressed with the store team of about a dozen associates.

"They are the epitome of 'family serving family,'" Beck said. "Associates greet every customer that enters the store by name. They know literally everyone who comes in to the store, and I saw lots of conversations with associates asking customers how their kids and family are. It's awesome seeing our associates cultivating such close relationships with our customers."

Green added, "The energy, commitment and most importantly the teamwork demonstrated by the Saipan team is outstanding. All of them welcome the customers with a big smile. I praise them for their loyalty to the organization."

Palacios, who is a Chamorro, said that people on the island, a mix of U.S. citizens, native Asians, Pacific Islanders and others, tend to be laid-back, humble and friendly.

"I love my job," she said. "I love working with our team. I enjoy meeting new people. The customers are often the same customers all year long, so we know our customers very well. I know the Exchange is 'family serving family,' but it feels like it's even more than that, because it's a small island and everyone knows each other."

See original post at https://publicaffairs-sme.com/FamilyServingFamily/2023/07/17/saipan-troop-store-team-greets-a-small-island-with-a-big-heart/

EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

4.2-magnitude quake in Pagan

At 12:01AM on July 18 2023, a report of a 4.2-magnitude earthquake occurred at 18.312°N 145.432°E in the Pagan region, NMI. There were no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

4.3-magnitude quake in Marianas

At 4:41pm on July 13 2023, a report of a 4.3-magnitude earthquake occurred at 21.509°N 143.232°E in the Mariana Islands region. There were no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Letting the air out: With inflation coming down, the next months are pivotal

After months of teetering on the edge, it seems inflation is declining steadily, to the point where the specter of mega-price jumps erasing savings and putting families at risk of destitution is fading, with the Consumer Price Index falling from 4% to 3% last month.

The Federal Reserve is taking a victory lap here, and they deserve some credit, though the extent to which their dramatic rate hikes were the driving force in cooling inflation is arguable; they had an impact, no doubt, but the resolution of a number of supply chain issues has potentially been the most significant factor, one that the central bank has little control over.

For them to be still on the rate hike war path is concerning, given the extent to which there is agreement—though obviously not consensus—in the economics sphere about the likelihood that we will be achieving our coveted soft landing has risen substantially, to the point that keeping a hand on the throttle might make us miss the runway in a catastrophic way.

Yet the Fed and its preternaturally conservative bent will do what it deems fit, just as it always has. For their part, consumers should feel more confident that the economy won't fall out from under their feet. While low unemployment has been met with skepticism by Fed Chair Jay Powell, it's good news for Americans who are not only seeing work, but seeing the labor crunch raise wages and grant them greater bargaining power, which has fed into something of an overdue organized labor blowback.

It's not all sunshines and rainbows; mortgages remain very high, and certain adverse economic circumstances will not and cannot be fixed by top-down monetary policy, but by the painstaking work of long-term economic and infrastructure strategies.

Fed policy can impact but not ultimately address New York's high rents, for example. Only sustained local pressure and incentives for housing construction can help. Still, if runaway inflation is one fewer issue that consumers have to worry about, we'll count that as a win.

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MIKE SMITH
WE NEED TO TURN DESANTIS INTO A MORE EMBRACEABLE CANDIDATE.
THAT WON'T BE EASY.
DESANTIS

Cluster urgency but messaging dud

By MARTIN SCHRAM
Tribune News Service

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com

On March 2, 2022, the United States ambassador to the United Nations stood in front of the iconic green marble backdrop of the United Nations General Assembly and delivered a tough message that the Biden administration wanted all the world to hear.

Today, more than a year later, you can still hear Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield's speech in its entirety on YouTube:

"We have seen videos of Russian forces moving exceptionally lethal weaponry into Ukraine, which has no place on the battlefield. That includes cluster munitions and vacuum bombs, which are banned under the Geneva Convention."

But you can't read it in its entirety today in the official transcript.

That's because, after she spoke, a Biden administration official figured it might be worthwhile to try to come just a bit closer at making their messagery match reality. After all, while more than 100 countries signed on to the Geneva Convention ban on cluster weapons, Russia and the United States never did. So two days after Thomas-Greenfield's firm speech, the State Department deleted her line about how those weapons have "no place on the battlefield" from its official transcript of the speech, which you can still listen to in its entirety. The officials also inserted an asterisk, explaining in a footnote that the Geneva Convention ban only applied to using cluster munitions against civilians. This past week, it became clear that from now on, it's Joe Biden's asterisk.

In an internationally controversial decision that Biden called difficult but necessary, he announced that he was providing Ukraine with the ground launched cluster munitions that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has desperately and urgently sought, to drop them on his own land. The U.S.-supplied, ground launched cluster munitions are to be used only against the Russian troops that have invaded. And they are now literally entrenched in Ukraine territory that Russia seized after more than a year of massive use of Russia's own cluster artillery and bombs against innocent Ukraine civilians.

I agree with former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and most other military experts that Biden made the right decision – because he had run out of options. He reluctantly made the only viable decision he could make at this late date to still provide Ukrainians with the essential means of saving their homeland from Vladimir Putin's civilian-slaughtering invaders. The United States had depleted its available arsenal of non-cluster bomb munitions.

But Biden's top advisers have squandered, by failing to effectively deploy, the one weapon they always had available – their own wartime message communication, command and control. They failed to fully mobilize an educated public.

America's artillery and other weapon production problems were long known by experts. In 2022, according to international security analyst Mark F. Cancian, at Washington's respected Center for Strategic and International Studies, a CSIS study "examined the ability of the defense industrial base to replace inventories in an emergency and found that the process would take many years for most items." In the Vietnam War, Cancian said, cluster munitions proved eight times more effective in producing casualties than standard high explosive projectiles.

But Biden has not been well served by his policy message and public education experts. Even as it became increasingly clear that the United States might deplete its available artillery munitions and need to supply Ukraine with cluster artillery – to be used against military invaders only.

For the past year they failed to communicate the huge differences that exist between Russia's and America's cluster bombs and munitions that explode in the air and scatter massive numbers of projectiles at targets below. Russia's cluster munitions have massive and perilous dud rates of 30% to 40% – unexploded bombs or grenades that can in effect later explode just as undiscovered land mines often do. The U.S. cluster munition dud rate is said to be 2.5%.

Most importantly, Biden officials have not been publicly explaining just how they intend to assure that Ukraine's use of U.S. cluster munitions will be only targeted at Russia's military invaders and occupiers. And Biden should promise that, when the war ends, America will join Ukraine in ridding the land of its perilous duds.

Ukraine's men, women, children and seniors have been helpless when they were targeted by Russia's cluster bombs as they were in their own homes. But Russia's invading and entrenched occupying troops always have a surefire way of no longer being killed or maimed by Ukraine launches of U.S. cluster munitions:

Just end their civilian-slaughtering invasion and go home. Or it's their asterisk.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

By giving Ukraine cluster bombs, the US is admitting that it's OK to kill civilians

By STEPHEN J. LYONS
Chicago Tribune

Stephen J. Lyons is the author of five books of essays and journalism. His new book Searching for Home, Adventures with Misanthropes *will be published in July.*

In 2008, more than 100 nations signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions, a treaty that "prohibits the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions."

The United States did not accede to the convention. Neither did Ukraine nor Russia, both of whom are using these weapons in their seemingly forever war.

A cluster munition is a weapon that keeps on killing long after its 72 submunitions, or bomblets, are shot in a shell from a 155 mm artillery weapon. Upon explosion in the air, they can litter an area the size of several football fields. If that wasn't horrible enough, these submunitions have, according to various government estimates, a "dud," or unexploded rate, of 2.35% to 6%. That means that every time a cluster bomb is employed, two to four of those 72 bomblets do not explode upon impact.

But "dud" doesn't mean these submunitions stay inactive. They can have the same dangerous lingering effect as a land mine. They stay active for decades. Children are often attracted to the colorful objects with disastrous outcomes.

The estimated dud rate is disputable. According to the Congressional Research Service, "There appear to be significant discrepancies among failure rate estimates. Some manufacturers claim a submunition failure rate of 2% to 5%, whereas mine clearance specialists have frequently reported failure rates of 10% to 30%. A number of factors influence submunition reliability. These include delivery technique, age of the submunition, air temperature, landing in soft or muddy ground, getting caught in trees and vegetation, and submunitions being damaged after dispersal, or landing in such a manner that their impact fuzes fail to initiate."

The United States has a huge stockpile of cluster munitions—4.7 million containing hundreds of millions of bomblets—that it is dusting off to deliver to Ukraine after a "difficult decision" by President Joe Biden.

The U.S. last used these munitions in its military excursion in Afghanistan. Trouble was that the little bombs resembled in color and shape the humanitarian aid packets that the U.S. dropped from planes. This confusion, which obviously left many civilians maimed or dead, led to the curtailment of cluster bombs for our next military adventure.

This did not stop Israel from using cluster bombs in its 2006 campaign against Hezbollah forces in Lebanon. According to a March 2022 Congressional Research Service report, Israel used them in the "last 3 days of the 34-day war after a U.N. cease-fire deal had been agreed to—resulting in almost 1 million unexploded cluster bomblets to which the U.N. attributed 14 deaths during the conflict." Israel's use of the bombs "supposedly affected 26% of southern Lebanon's arable land and contaminated about 13 square miles with unexploded submunitions. One report states that there was a failure rate of upward of 70% of Israel's cluster weapons," the agency said.

Recently, the international nongovernmental organization Human Rights Watch released a report from Kyiv that found that "Ukrainian forces have used cluster munitions that caused numerous deaths and serious injuries to civilians." The report also noted that Russians have used cluster munitions, "killing many civilians and causing other serious civilian harm."

Human Rights Watch also "found that Ukrainian cluster munition rocket attacks on Russian-controlled areas in and around the city of Izium in eastern Ukraine during 2022 caused many casualties among Ukrainian civilians."

Yes, Ukrainian civilians. Friendly fire. Price of war. Collateral damage.

In announcing the U.S.' decision to send these horrific weapons of war to Ukraine, Biden's national security mouthpiece, Jake Sullivan, admitted, "We recognize that cluster munitions create a risk of civilian harm from unexploded ordnance. This is why we deferred the decision for as long as we could."

So there it is, an admission at the highest level of our government that more innocents will die because of the use of these evil weapons of war. Additionally, large areas of arable land will no longer be able to be farmed because of these de facto mine fields.

In September 2016, Textron Systems, the last U.S. company to manufacture cluster bombs, ceased production of those munitions. For humanitarian reasons? Nope.

"Historically, sensor-fuzed weapon sales have relied on foreign military and direct commercial international customers for which both executive branch and congressional approval is required. The current political environment has made it difficult to obtain these approvals," the company complained.

The company was most upset that its proposed sale of cluster bombs to Saudi Arabia to use in that country's scorched earth campaign in Yemen was blocked by the White House.

But that was about seven years ago, an eternity for a country that routinely ignores history's lessons. With Biden's decision to supply these long-lasting instruments of destruction to Ukraine, that political environment has now changed for the worse.

Affirmative action is banned—except at military academies? Why that won't help students

By ZOE KREITENBERG
Los Angeles Times

Zoe Kreitenberg, a 2016 West Point graduate and former Army captain, is a student at Yale Law School.

With a conservative majority on the bench, the recent Supreme Court ruling to strike down affirmative action was widely expected. One unexpected twist, however, was an inconspicuous footnote exempting military academies from the drastic change.

In his majority opinion, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. briefly singled out military academies as the sole class of institutions allowed to maintain race-conscious admissions practices. This unexplained double standard illuminates the flaws in the court's decision in Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard. It may also doom more minority students to the discrimination that exists within the ranks of our nation's military.

The military academies are among the elite schools that drive much of the affirmative action debate. The Army and naval academies, West Point and Annapolis, often rank in the top liberal arts colleges nationwide. All five federal service academies—also including the Air Force Academy, Coast Guard Academy and Merchant Marine Academy—have acceptance rates under 17%, with some beating out institutions such as Cornell and Georgetown in selectivity.

Buried in a footnote, Roberts declared that the decision "does not address" the admissions practices of military academies. He did not clarify the reasons for the exemption, nor whether the footnote applies solely to federal service academies, excluding ROTC programs. Instead, he offered only that military academies were not parties to the lawsuit and that they have "potentially distinct interests" from other institutions.

Though the footnote fails to acknowledge it, military academies have been prominent in affirmative action jurisprudence, most notably in the Supreme Court's 2003 ruling in Grutter v. Bollinger. That decision upheld affirmative action at the University of Michigan Law School and largely created the modern framework for race-conscious admissions practices.

When the Supreme Court heard the Grutter case, a group of retired military officials wrote an amicus brief urging the court to rule in favor of affirmative action. The majority opinion in Grutter quoted directly from the generals' brief, stating that a "highly qualified, racially diverse officer corps … is essential to the military's ability to fulfill its principle mission to provide national security." Former military leaders filed a similar amicus brief in Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard, defending the continued use of race-conscious policies at both military academies and civilian universities. The retired military officials who advocated for affirmative action understood that it provides an effective route to diversity, and that diversity allows institutions and individuals to thrive.

Roberts' footnote fails to offer evidence that diversity in higher education, and opportunities for underrepresented minorities, matter only at military academies. In reality, diversity is valuable to the academies because it is valuable to every institution. Furthermore, as Justice Sonia Sotomayor noted in her dissent, national security interests cannot explain the exemption, because those "interests are also implicated at civilian universities."

Sotomayor is correct. Military academies and the armed forces make up only a fraction of our national security infrastructure. Many of our top engineers, diplomats and Pentagon officials attended private and public civilian universities, where affirmative action created opportunities for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Perhaps even more perversely, in permitting race-based admissions policies at military academies alone, the court seems to invite minority candidates to pursue an education and career in the military, where discriminatory policies and attitudes can stifle success.

As a West Point graduate, I love my alma mater and care deeply about the Army, but our military must do more to ensure that every service member is treated with dignity and respect. Currently, Black service members face an up to 71% greater likelihood of punishment across the military, and nearly 53% of minority service members have personally witnessed white nationalism or racist ideologies in their units. Additionally, when members of the armed forces experience discrimination, they cannot always seek legal remedies in ways that civilians can, and they may encounter challenges to reporting internally. Around one in three Black service members hesitate to report discrimination internally for fear of retribution.

When I was a senior at West Point, I led the academy's cadet diversity, equity and inclusion program. Even under a Democratic administration, making way for DEI at a military academy was a challenge. Incremental progress has fortunately been made in the years since I graduated, and the military has implemented some of the changes that it resisted when I was a cadet. The Department of Defense issued guidance in 2020 "rejecting divisive symbols" and providing a list of flags authorized at military installations that excluded the Confederate flag. This year, West Point is set to rename cadet barracks and other areas that bear the name of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. These moves are good for the institution, and the military should continue to push forward.

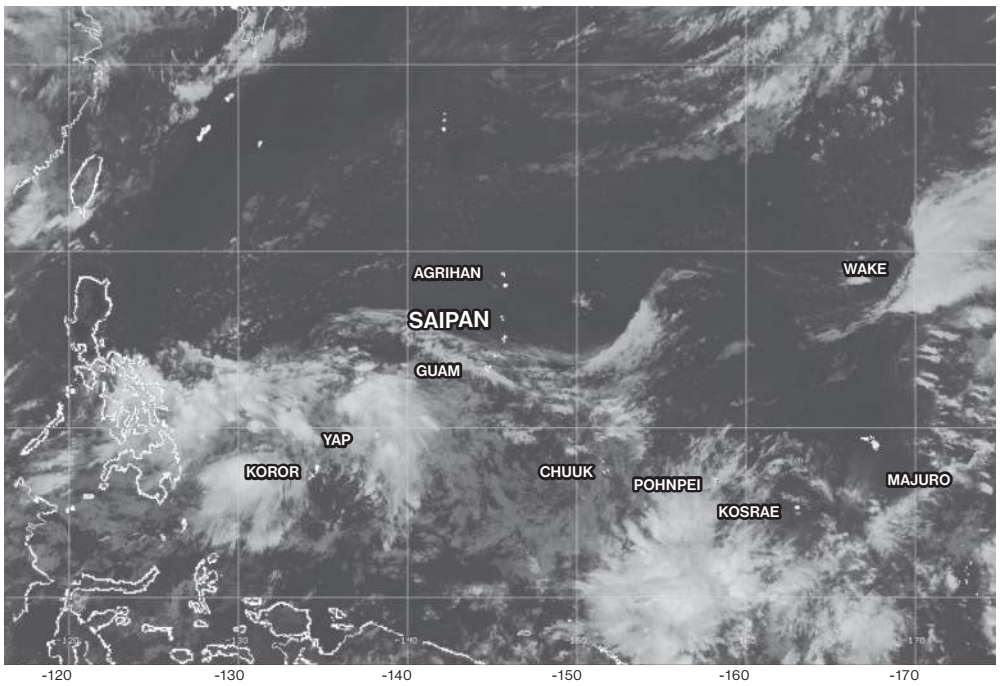
The Supreme Court's decision limits options for promising students. In this new era, Congress and Biden administration officials must continue to improve the military's practices to enable members from all backgrounds to succeed within our ranks, and policymakers must seek to open new pathways to higher education.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Isolated showers. Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	A chance of showers. Mostly cloudy	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
86º 79º	86º 80º	86º 79º	84º 80º	84º 80º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:54 AM, WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate trades prevail in the Marianas. Satellite imagery and Doppler radar indicate some minor open cells moving across the waters. Ipan buoy shows seas are about 3 to 4 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	88° / 82°
Palau	Thunderstorms/Wind	84° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Scattered Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Friday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Saturday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Sunday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Monday	5:57 AM	6:49 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	7:43 AM	8:46 PM	-
Friday	8:32 AM	9:21 PM	-
Saturday	9:19 AM	9:55 PM	-
Sunday	10:05 AM	10:28 PM	-
Monday	10:51 AM	11:02 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Showers	61° / 54°
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	101° / 76°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	88° / 82°
Honolulu	Showers/Wind	83° / 76°
London	Partly Cloudy	73° / 55°
Los Angeles	Sunny	87° / 65°
Manila	Thunderstorms	90° / 79°
Melbourne	Showers	56° / 42°
Miami	Scattered Thunderstorms	88° / 82°
New York	Partly Cloudy	86° / 72°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	89° / 74°
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	80° / 59°
Busan	Cloudy	79° / 72°
Rome	Sunny	99° / 75°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	95° / 73°
San Francisco	Cloudy	64° / 54°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	92° / 74°
Tokyo	Thunderstorms	90° / 74°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	88° / 71°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
3:34 AM	Low Tide	1.39
8:08 AM	High Tide	1.92
3:34 PM	Low Tide	0.04
10:40 PM	High Tide	1.92

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 19, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1, 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3467	3:00AM	7:10AM	Daily up to July 20
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
TW9308	4:45AM	8:45AM	1, 5 July 17 to Aug 18
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7 from July 21

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1, 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3468	8:20PM	1:50AM+1	Daily up to July 19
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
TW9307	10:00PM	3:45AM+1	6, 4 July 23 to Aug 20
7C3405	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7 from July 20

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

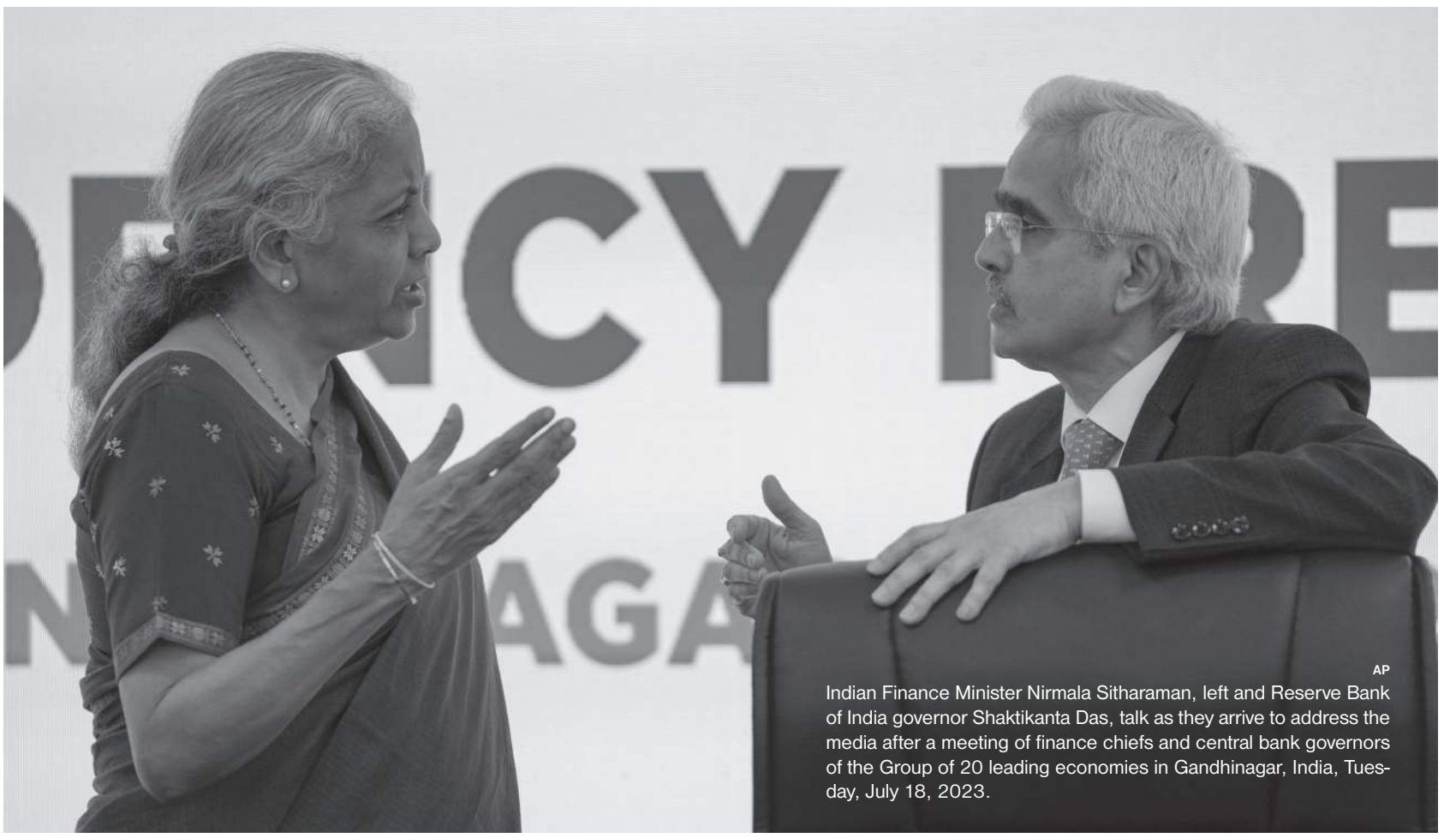
G20 meeting ends without consensus on Ukraine war

NEW DELHI (AP)—A meeting of finance chiefs and central bank governors of the Group of 20 leading economies ended on Tuesday in India without a consensus because of differences between countries over the war in Ukraine.

Following two days of talks, there was no final communique. Instead, India, as the host nation, was forced to issue the G20 Chair's summary and an outcome document.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting concluded in Gandhinagar, a city in the western state of Gujarat, India's finance minister said the reason for the chair statement was "because we still don't have a common language on the Russia Ukraine war".

Nirmala Sitharaman said that the language describing the war had been drawn directly from last year's G20 leaders summit declaration in Indonesia. "We don't have the mandate to change that," she said, adding that this was something the leaders would have to decide when they gather in the capital, New Delhi, for the main summit in September.



AP

Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, left and Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das, talk as they arrive to address the media after a meeting of finance chiefs and central bank governors of the Group of 20 leading economies in Gandhinagar, India, Tuesday, July 18, 2023.

According to the chair summary, China and Russia objected to paragraphs referring to the war which said it was causing "immense human suffering" and "exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy". The wording was taken from the previous declaration in Indonesia, where leaders had strongly condemned the war.

Similarly in February and March, when India hosted G20 finance chiefs and foreign ministers, objections from Russia and China meant that India had to issue a chair's summary.

Food security was a key priority, Sitharaman said. Members raised Russia's move Monday to halt the deal that allowed grain to flow from Ukraine via the Black Sea to parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia where high food prices have pushed more people into poverty.

"It is in that context today that several members condemned it, saying it shouldn't have happened. Food passing through the Black Sea shouldn't have been stopped or suspended," she told reporters.

During its presidency of the G20 this year, India has consistently appealed for all members of the fractured grouping to reach consensus on issues of particular concern to poorer countries, like debt distress, inflation and the threat of climate change, even if the broader East-West split over Ukraine can't be resolved.

Sitharaman said that members held wide discussions on the overall global economic outlook, paying specific attention to food and energy issues, climate financing and how to improve assistance to debt-distressed countries.

As host, India has used its presidency to promote itself as a rising superpower and as the voice of the Global South. Still, the divide over Russia's war in Ukraine has cast a shadow over much of the proceedings, with India unable to produce a communique after any of the major meetings since it took over the G20 presidency.

India's longstanding ties to Russia have also loomed as the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine continues despite U.S. and allied countries' efforts to sanction and economically bludgeon Russia's economy. India has not taken part in the efforts to punish Russia and maintains its energy ties despite a Group of Seven agreed-upon price cap on Russian oil, which has seen some success in slowing Russia's economy.

Meanwhile, Western officials have continued to speak out against Moscow in international groupings. Over the weekend, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, who is in India to attend the G20 talks, told reporters that ending the war in Ukraine "is first and foremost a moral imperative. But it's also the single best thing we can do for the global economy."

She added the U.S. would continue to cut off Russia's access to the military equipment and technologies that it needs to wage war against Ukraine.

GRMC announces retirement of its CEO

» Hospital anticipates new appointment

DEDEDO, Guam—Guam Regional Medical City announces the retirement of its chief executive officer Alan Funtanilla.

Funtanilla

Funtanilla has had a remarkable career in healthcare spanning almost 40 years, with nine years of dedicated service to GRMC. He initially served as the chief nursing officer, later became the chief operating officer, and last served in the role of CEO for the past two years.

Under Funtanilla's leadership, GRMC has consistently delivered high-quality care and patient satisfaction, earning numerous awards for excellence throughout its eight years of operation, including three accreditations and a Gold Seal of Approval for "Advanced Primary Stroke Center" from The Joint Commission (TJC), multiple recognitions in stroke and cardiology from the American Heart Association (AHA), voted "Best Off-Base Medical Service in the Pacific" in 2022 and 2023 by Stars and Stripes readers, and more. GRMC's announcement of Funtanilla's successor will be forthcoming soon.

Although Funtanilla is retiring from his position as CEO, he has agreed to contribute to GRMC in a consulting capacity. During the transition period, GRMC's existing Executive Leadership Team will continue to oversee their respective functional areas and collaborate closely with the chairman and the Board of Directors until a new CEO is appointed by the board.

GRMC remains committed to its mission of delivering exceptional healthcare to the community, and with the continued efforts of its dedicated team, it will strive to uphold its standards of excellence in patient care. ***(PR)***

Executive: Big tech can't be trusted to guarantee AI safety

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The handful of big tech companies leading the race to commercialize AI can't be trusted to guarantee the safety of systems we don't yet understand and that are prone to "chaotic or unpredictable behavior," an artificial intelligence company executive told the first U.N. Security Council meeting on AI's threats to global peace on Tuesday.

Jack Clark, co-founder of the AI company Anthropic, said that's why the world must come together to prevent the technology's misuse.

Clark, who says his company bends over backwards to train its AI chatbot to emphasize safety and caution, said the most useful things that can be done now "are to work on developing ways to test for capabilities, misuses and potential safety flaws of these systems." Clark left OpenAI, creator of the best-known ChatGPT chatbot, to form Anthropic, whose competing AI product is called Claude.

He traced the growth of AI over the past decade to 2023 where new AI systems can beat military pilots in air fighting simulations, stabilize the plasma in nuclear fusion reactors, design components for next generation semiconductors, and inspect goods on production lines.

But while AI will bring huge benefits, its understanding of biology, for example, may also use an AI system that can produce biological weapons, he said.

Clark also warned of "potential threats to international peace, security and global stability" from two essential qualities of AI systems – their potential for misuse and their unpredictability "as well as the inherent fragility of them being developed by such a narrow set of actors."

Clark stressed that across the world it's the tech companies that have the sophisticated computers, large pools of data and capital to build AI systems and therefore they seem likely to continue to define their development

In a video briefing to the U.N.'s most powerful body, Clark also expressed hope that global action will succeed.

He said he's encouraged to see many countries emphasize the importance of safety testing and evaluation in their AI proposals, including the European Union, China and the United States.

Right now, however, there are no standards or even best practices on "how to test these frontier systems for things like discrimination, misuse or safety," which makes it hard for governments to create policies and lets the private sector enjoy an information advantage, he said.

"Any sensible approach to regulation will start with having the ability to evaluate an AI system for a given capability or flaw," Clark said. "And any failed approach will start with grand policy ideas that are not supported by effective measurements and evaluations."

With robust and reliable evaluation of AI systems, he said, "governments can keep companies accountable, and companies can earn the trust of the world that they want to deploy their AI systems into." But if there is no robust evaluation, he said, "we run the risk of regulatory capture compromising global security and handing over the future to a narrow set of private sector actors."

Nation

Phoenix breaks big US city records in global heat wave

AP
A digital billboard displays an unofficial temperature, Monday, July 17, 2023, in downtown Phoenix.

PHOENIX (AP)—A dangerous 19th straight day of scorching heat in Phoenix set a record for U.S. cities Tuesday, confined many residents to air-conditioned safety and turned the usually vibrant metropolis into a ghost town.

The city's record streak of 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 Celsius) or more stood out even amid sweltering temperatures across the globe. It reached 117 degrees (47.2 Celsius) by 3 p.m.

Human-caused climate change and a newly formed El Nino are combining to shatter heat records worldwide, scientists say.

No other major city – defined as the 25 most populous in the United States – has had any stretch of 110-degree (43.3-degree) days or 90-degree (32.2-degree) nights longer than Phoenix, said weather historian Christopher Burt of the Weather Company.

"When you have several million people subjected to that sort of thermal abuse, there are impacts," said NOAA Climate Analysis Group Director Russell Vose, who chairs a committee on national records.

For Phoenix, it's not only the brutal daytime highs that are deadly. The lack of a nighttime cooldown can rob people without access to air conditioning of the break their bodies need to function properly.

With Tuesday's low of 94 F (34.4 C), the city has had nine straight days of temperatures that didn't go below 90 F (32.2 C) at night, breaking another record there, according to National Weather Service meteorologist Matt Salerno, who called it "pretty miserable when you don't have any recovery overnight."

On Monday, the city also set a record for the hottest overnight low temperature: 95 F (35 C). During the day, the heat built up so early that the city hit the 110 mark a couple minutes before noon.

Dog parks emptied out by the mid-morning and evening concerts and other outdoor events were cancelled to protect performers and attendees. The city's Desert Botanical Garden, a vast outdoor collection of cactus and other desert plants, over the weekend began shutting down at 2 p.m. before the hottest part of the day.

In the hours before the new record was set, rivers of sweat streamed down the sunburned face of Lori Miccichi, 38, as she pushed a shopping cart filled with her belongings through downtown Phoenix, looking for a place to get out of the heat.

"I've been out here a long time and homeless for about three years," said Miccichi. "When it's like this, you just have to get into the shade. This last week has been the hottest I ever remember."

Some 200 cooling and hydration centers have been set up across the metro area, but most shut down between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. due to staffing and funding issues.

The entire globe has simmered to record heat both in June and July. Nearly every day of this month, the global average temperature has been warmer than the unofficial hottest day recorded before 2023, according to University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer. U.S. weather stations have broken more than 860 heat records in the past seven days, according to NOAA.

DeSantis fights to reset stagnant campaign

WEST COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—For Ron DeSantis, it was supposed to be an important opportunity to help reset his stagnant Republican presidential campaign. But yet again, the moment was overshadowed by Donald Trump.

The former president's new legal challenges dominated much of the day as DeSantis spoke at a brief press conference and sat for a highly anticipated interview designed to reassure anxious donors and primary voters alike that he's still well-positioned to defeat Trump. And again, DeSantis offered mixed messages when asked about Trump, training his most aggressive criticism at federal law enforcement officials instead of his chief Republican rival, who could soon be charged over his efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

"We look at institutions, unfortunately, like our own FBI and Department of Justice, and we've seen the politicization of those institutions. We've seen them be weaponized against Americans," DeSantis said. A few minutes later, he added a modest jab when pressed about Trump's role in the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol: "He should have come out more forcefully, of course, but to try to criminalize that, that's a different issue entirely."

The muddled message comes as DeSantis faces new urgency to refocus his White House bid coming out of the most tumultuous weekend of his young campaign. Less than two months after entering the race, he's already cutting staff while facing new questions about his aggressive spending, his media strategy and his apparent willingness to brawl with any and all foes except for Trump, the one person he must defeat to claim the GOP's 2024 presidential nomination.

"The DeSantis campaign is recalibrating. It's clear it needs to," said Republican strategist Terry Sullivan, who managed Marco Rubio's 2016 presidential campaign. "But at the end of the day, they're still better positioned than any other challenger to Donald Trump, times 10."

DeSantis' team has quietly expressed confidence for months that voters would eventually tire of Trump's escalating legal troubles and personal baggage. But that same baggage, playing out in the U.S. legal system just as the GOP primary intensifies, is leaving precious little oxygen for his rivals to break through. And Trump's standing with Republican primary voters seems to be growing stronger with every new legal challenge.

Still, DeSantis' team has raised a stunning $150 million for his presidential ambitions so far. The vast majority, $130 million, has gone to a super PAC run by allies who cannot legally coordinate with the campaign.

The DeSantis campaign itself raised more than $20 million in the first six weeks he was in the race, though federal filings released over the weekend revealed that he and his team had burned through more than $8 million in a spending spree that included more than 100 paid staffers, a large security detail and luxury travel.

DeSantis' team acknowledged over the weekend that he was cutting "less than 10" staffers to help reduce costs. On Tuesday, a spokesperson declined to answer specific questions about other expenditures or future spending plans.

DeSantis' team may have begun to take modest steps to cut costs elsewhere.

ACROSS THE NATION

IRS whistleblowers to testify to Congress

WASHINGTON (AP)—Whistleblowers claiming the Justice Department improperly interfered with a yearslong investigation into Hunter Biden will testify before Congress on Wednesday as House Republicans accelerate their probes into the president and his family. Leaders of the House Judiciary, Oversight and Accountability, and Ways and Means committees will lead a hearing with two Internal Revenue Service employees—Greg Shapley and an as-yet-unnamed "whistleblower x"—who claim there was a pattern of "slow-walking investigative steps" into Hunter Biden, including delayed enforcement actions in the months before the 2020 election won by Joe Biden. It will be the first public testimony from the two IRS agents assigned to the federal case into President Joe Biden's youngest son, Hunter, which was focused on tax and gun charges. The second agent, whose name was withheld in interview transcripts released by Republicans, is expected to have his identity revealed at the hearing.

Authorities announce 'person of interest' in deaths of 4 women in Oregon

SALEM, Ore. (AP)—The announcement that authorities are holding a person of interest in the case of four women found dead this year around Portland has mothers of the victims hoping they may finally get answers about what happened to their daughters. One of the victims was Charity Lynn Perry, 24, whose body was discovered April 24 in a state park along the Columbia River Gorge. Her mother, Diana Allen, said Tuesday that she learned the news about the person of interest from traditional and social media, although she is in communication with a detective on the case. "I'm in the dark about a lot," Allen told The Associated Press. "But the detective and I understand why this is required. We don't need anything messing up this investigation." Allen said she knows Charity died in April, but she has not been given an exact date and authorities were unable to tell how she died just from looking at her. The state medical examiner has not determined the cause or manner of death for Charity or the other women, prosecutors said in a statement.

Northwestern hazing scandal puts school in company with schools such as Penn State

Northwestern has been added to a long list of American universities to face a scandal in athletics and may eventually join the trend of making large payouts following allegations of sexual abuse. A former Wildcats football player filed the first lawsuit against Pat Fitzgerald and members of the school's leadership on Tuesday, seeking damages stemming from a hazing scandal that cost the former football coach his job. More lawsuits, filed by multiple law firms, are expected to follow from former football and baseball players as well as from student-athletes who played other sports for the private school. The private, Big Ten institution now has another thing in common with other schools in the conference, including Penn State, Michigan State, Ohio State, Michigan and Minnesota, with a scandal tied to sexual abuse. And, connection may be costly. At least eight former Northwestern football players have retained attorneys following recent revelations that led to Fitzgerald's firing and sharp criticism of university leadership for its initial response to the allegations. ***(AP)***

Asia

Thousands died in PH's 'war on drugs'

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)—Appeals judges at the International Criminal Court ruled Tuesday that an investigation into the Philippines' deadly "war on drugs" can resume, rejecting Manila's objections to the case going ahead at the global court.

The court's investigation was suspended in late 2021 after the Philippines said it was already probing the same allegations and argued that the ICC — a court of last resort — therefore didn't have jurisdiction.

The Philippines launched its appeal after judges in January agreed with the court's chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, that deferring the investigation to Manila was "not warranted." At the time, judges ruled that the domestic proceedings did not amount to "tangible, concrete and progressive investigative steps in a way that would sufficiently mirror the court's investigation."

At a hearing Tuesday, Presiding Judge Marc Perrin de Brichambaut said the five-judge appeals panel, in a majority decision, agreed and rejected the Philippines' appeal.

More than 6,000 suspects, most of them people who lived in poverty, have been killed in the crackdown on drug crime, according to government pronouncements. Human rights groups say the death toll is considerably higher and should include many unsolved killings by motorcycle-riding gunmen who may have been deployed by police.

Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has defended the crackdown as "lawfully directed against drug lords and pushers who have for many years destroyed the present generation, especially the youth."

Duterte withdrew the Philippines from The Hague-based court in 2019 in a move rights activists said was an attempt to evade accountability and prevent an international probe into the killings in his campaign against illegal drugs. However, the ICC still has jurisdiction over alleged crimes committed when the country was still a member state of the court.

The current Philippine president, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., said last year that Manila has no plan to rejoin the ICC, a decision that supported his predecessor's stance but rejects the wishes of human rights activists.

"The ICC appeals chamber decision rejects Philippine government claims that the ICC should not investigate in the country," said Bryony Lau, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "President Marcos should back up his stated commitment to human rights by cooperating with the ICC prosecutor's inquiry."

US deploys nuclear-armed submarine to S. Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The United States deployed a nuclear-armed submarine to South Korea on Tuesday for the first time in four decades, as the allies warned North Korea that any use of the North's nuclear weapons in combat would result in the end of its regime.

Periodic visits by U.S. nuclear ballistic missile-capable submarines to South Korea were one of several agreements reached by the two countries' presidents in April in response to North Korea's expanding nuclear threat. They also agreed to establish a bilateral Nuclear Consultative Group and expand military exercises.

The USS Kentucky, an Ohio-class submarine, arrived at the South Korean port of Busan on Tuesday afternoon, South Korea's Defense Ministry said. It is the first visit by a U.S. nuclear-armed submarine to South Korea since the 1980s, it said.

Defense Minister Lee Jong-Sup called the submarine's visit a demonstration of U.S. resolve in implementing its "extended deterrence" commitment, a pledge by the U.S. to use its full military capabilities, including nuclear weapons, to protect its allies, the ministry said in a statement.

He said the submarine's visit "shows the allies' overwhelming capability and posture against North Korea."

During the Cold War in the late 1970s, U.S. nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines made frequent visits to South Korea, sometimes two or three times per month, according to the Federation of American Scientists. It was a period when the U.S. had hundreds of nuclear warheads located in South Korea. But in 1991, the United States withdrew all of its nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula.

North Korea's nuclear ambitions have taken on a new urgency after it threatened to use nuclear weapons in conflicts with its rivals and conducted about 100 missile tests since the start of last year. Last week, North Korea conducted a second test of a more mobile and powerful intercontinental ballistic missile designed to strike the mainland United States. After observing that launch, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to further strengthen his country's nuclear combat capabilities.

Also on Tuesday, South Korean and U.S. officials held the inaugural meeting of the Nuclear Consultative Group in Seoul to discuss ways to strengthen deterrence against North Korea's nuclear threats.

"Any nuclear attack by North Korea against the United States or its allies is unacceptable and will result in the end of that regime," the two countries said in a joint statement after the meeting.

President Joe Biden issued a similar warning after his summit in Washington with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol in April.

"Both sides affirmed that the NCG will play an integral role in discussing and advancing bilateral approaches, including guidelines, to nuclear and strategic planning and responses to (North Korean) aggression," the statement said.

The consultative body is tasked with sharing information on nuclear and strategic weapons operation plans and joint operations. The U.S. will retain operational control of its nuclear weapons. U.S. officials say the group's establishment and other steps announced in April were meant to ease South Korean worries about North Korean provocations while keeping Seoul from pursuing its own nuclear program.

Earlier Tuesday, Yoon told a Cabinet meeting that the launching of the consultative group "will serve as an important starting point to establish a powerful, effective (South) Korea-U.S. extended deterrence," and that their alliance has been "upgraded with a new, nuclear-based paradigm."

The meeting was co-chaired by U.S. National Security Coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell and South Korean Deputy National Security Director Kim Tae-hyo.

North Korea condemned the Biden-Yoon agreements in April, saying they proved the allies' extreme hostility toward the North. It threatened to further escalate its nuclear use doctrine in protest.

In a statement Monday, Kim's powerful sister and senior adviser, Kim Yo Jong, warned that U.S. moves to reinforce its extended deterrence commitment to South Korea will make North Korea "go farther away from the negotiating table desired by (the U.S.)" and beef up its own military capability.

World

US: Ukraine has significant combat power not yet committed to the war

AP

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley speaks during a news conference with Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin at the Pentagon in Washington, Tuesday, July 18, 2023.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Ukrainian forces have a "significant amount of combat power" that hasn't yet been committed to the war, the top U.S. military officer said Tuesday, saying Kyiv is conserving some of its tactical effort while troops slowly work their way through deadly Russian minefields.

Speaking to reporters after defense leaders from around the world met to discuss Ukraine's military needs, Army Gen. Mark Milley was asked about the slow pace of Ukraine's offensive to take back territory seized by Russia. He said Ukraine will decide when to use the combat power and complex training the U.S. and allies have provide. He flatly dismissed suggestions the offensive is failing.

"It is far from a failure, in my view. I think that it's way too early to make that kind of call," said Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Right now they are preserving their combat power. And they are slowly and deliberately and steadily working their way through all these minefields, and it's a tough fight. It's a very difficult fight."

Milley and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met with reporters at the close of the 14th meeting of the Ukraine contact group, which is made up of the defense and military leaders from more than 50 nations. The group met virtually Tuesday to discuss how to continue to meet Ukraine's need for weapons and training.

Austin said he asked allies to "continue to dig deep into their military stocks," particularly for ammunition, which Ukraine urgently needs.

The officials announced no new military aid, but the U.S. this month agreed to provide thousands of cluster munitions to Ukraine, and included them in an $800 million aid package. The munitions, which are being taken from Pentagon stocks, began arriving in Ukraine for the war effort last week. Overall the U.S. has provided more than $40 billion in aid to Ukraine.

Austin and Milley's comments came as tensions between the U.S. and Russia continue to spike. There has been a recent series of close calls between Russian and U.S. military aircraft over Syria, including a Sunday incident when a Russian fighter jet flew very close to a U.S. surveillance plane that was carrying a crew of four.

The Russian Su-35 flew so close to a U.S. MC-12, that it forced the American plane to go through the turbulent wake, putting the crew's lives in danger.

Lt Gen Alex Grynkewich, the commander of U.S. Air Forces Central, said Tuesday that "these actions against a manned aircraft represent a new level of unsafe and unprofessional actions by Russian aircraft operating in Syria" He said flying into the turbulance reduced the U.S. crew's ability to safely operate their aircraft. The MC-12 is a twin engine turbo prop.

Suspected Israeli airstrikes hit Damascus, surrounding area

BEIRUT (AP)—Israeli airstrikes hit the area of Damascus early Wednesday, Syrian state media reported.

Syrian state-run news agency SANA reported that Syria's air defenses had shot down "most of" the missiles. It said in a statement, citing military sources, that two soldiers were injured and there were "some material losses" from the airstrikes.

Israeli authorities did not comment immediately.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition-linked war monitor, said the strikes marked the 20th time Israel has struck targets in Syria this year.

The observatory said the strikes had hit military sites and warehouses of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, an ally of the Syrian government, causing the outbreak of a fire.

Israel, which has vowed to stop Iranian entrenchment next door, has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets in government-controlled parts of neighboring Syria in recent years, but it rarely acknowledges them.

The lasted reported Israeli airstrikes in Syria were on July 2, when Syria's military said Israel had carried out airstrikes on areas near the central Syrian city of Homs, causing material damage but no casualties.

A Syrian anti-aircraft missile exploded over Israeli territory, the Israeli military said, prompting another round of strikes.

Israel has also targeted the international airports in Damascus and the northern Syrian city of Aleppo several times over the past few years, often putting it out of commission.

Environment

Report: FSM faces health threats, stronger storms from climate change

HONOLULU—Stronger typhoons, growing challenges for populations on low-lying atolls, ecosystem declines, and human health issues are among the major risks detailed in a new report on climate change in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Threatened resources include culturally significant coastal infrastructure and the tens of millions of dollars that fisheries inject into the FSM economy annually, according to the report by the Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment, or PIRCA, a consortium of several government, non-government organizations, and research entities.

CLM PHOTOGRAPHY

In Yap State, stonework construction methods were used as an adaptive response to historical sea level variability, for example in this oceanside faluw, or traditional men's house. However, sea level rise is now challenging this traditional strategy.

The new report, *Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia: Indicators and Considerations for Key Sectors*, is one in a series of PIRCA reports. Authors from the East-West Center, Arizona State University, and the University of Hawai'i—along with 30 technical contributors from local government, NGOs, and research organizations—collaboratively developed the FSM PIRCA report.

"This research is important to translate science and reality into pragmatic solutions to address climate change," said Lucille Apis-Overhoff, FSM's assistant secretary of Climate Change and a contributor to the report.

Another contributor, College of Micronesia–FSM research scientist Dr. Murukesan Krishnapillai, has studied climate-related changes affecting the country's communities and developed technical assistance programs that strengthen resilience of local food systems. "By delving into crucial aspects such as rising temperatures, extreme events, sea level rise, migration, human health risks, and food security, this report unveils the intricate web of challenges posed by climate variability and change," Krishnapillai said. "Its analysis equips decision-makers with the insights necessary to develop effective action plans, ensuring a more resilient and sustainable future for the Federated States of Micronesia."

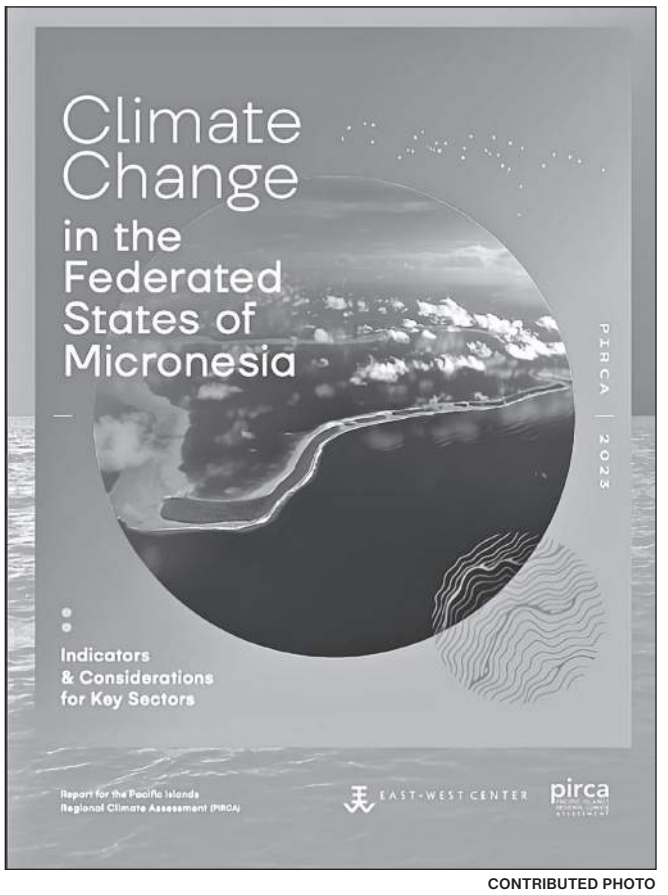
ON THE NET

- Download the new report: https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/climate-change-federated-states-micronesia-indicators-and-considerations-key-sectors

Key messages

Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia lays out the changes the country is already experiencing, and what lies ahead. The key messages for decision-makers include:

- Hotter days and nights and stronger typhoons affect human health. Temperatures have risen, and heat waves exacerbate a range of pre-existing health issues. More intense tropical cyclones mean a greater potential for loss of life, damage, and public health issues. Hot weather and storms pose a particular threat to women, children, and older adults.
- Sea level rise threatens infrastructure, including housing, drinking water, and transportation, as well as agroforestry, ecosystems, and cultural sites. More frequent and extensive coastal flooding and erosion are anticipated as sea level rise accelerates. The FSM's numerous low-lying atolls especially face growing challenges.
- Ocean changes disrupt fisheries and cause coral death. In the FSM, the ocean is life—more than 70 percent of FSM households engage in fishing. Fisheries changes and extensive coral loss are possible within the next few decades if current trends in rising ocean temperatures continue.
- Collaborations can bolster traditional knowledge and cultural resources and enhance resilience. National government, state agencies, non-governmental organizations, local communities, and others can work together to expand adaptation strategies.


Climate Change
in the Federated States of Micronesia
PIRCA | 2023
Indicators & Considerations for Key Sectors
Report for the Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment (PIRCA)
EAST-WEST CENTER
pirca

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The new report, *Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia: Indicators and Considerations for Key Sectors.*

About climate change in the Federated States of Micronesia and the PIRCA

The collective efforts of the technical contributors, coordinating authors, and PIRCA Advisory Committee made the FSM PIRCA report possible. The report builds upon the US National Climate Assessment, offering a closer look at climate change impacts in the FSM and providing information for a wide range of sectors.

The PIRCA is funded and supported by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's CAP/RISA Program (through the Pacific RISA), the East-West Center's Research Program, Arizona State University's Global Institute of Sustainability and Innovation, the Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Science Center, and the US Global Change Research Program. ***(PR)***

Wildfires have burned record amount of area in the Canadian province of British Columbia

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP)—Wildfires have already burned a record amount of area in the Canadian province of British Columbia and the situation will probably get worse due to more hot, dry weather, government officials said Tuesday.

The fires are responsible for at least two deaths in the province and, combined with a severe drought, will impact farmers and cattle producers.

Bowinn Ma, B.C.'s minister of emergency management, told a news conference 391 wildfires are currently active in the province with over half of them out of control.

There have been 235 wildfires start in the last seven days.

"We know that the road ahead of us is long, complex and challenging," said Ma.

The BC Wildfire Service website said since April 1, 1,183 wildfires have burned 13986 square kilometers (5,400 square miles). That surpasses the previous full-year record of 13,543 square kilometers (5,228 square miles) set in 2018.

Cliff Chapman, director of operations for the B.C. Wildfire Service, said the province is just entering the "core fire season" of July and August.

"The models don't look great for the rest of the summer," said Chapman. "With the amount of lightning we saw in this province over the course of the last 10 days coupled with the drought that we are experiencing, we have high potential for holdover fires."

On Monday, the B.C. Coroner's office posted a public safety bulletin confirming it is investigating the death of a 9-year-old boy who died from asthma exacerbated by wildfire smoke.

"The loss of that boy . . . I can't imagine a worse situation for a family to go through," said Ma.

Last week a 19-year-old firefighter died after a tree fell on her near Revelstoke, British Columbia.

Another firefighter, Adam Yeadon, 25, died Saturday while fighting a wildfire near his home in Fort Liard, N.W.T.

B.C.'s drought bulletin shows 18 of the province's 34 water basins are at drought Level 4, meaning harm to ecosystems and communities is likely. A further four are at the highest Level 5, when all efforts should be made to conserve water and protect critical environmental flows.

Ma said officials are concerned about long-term drought conditions, with potential impacts being forecast for the 2024 wildfire season.

"If we do not get significant precipitation over the winter and into the spring, those reservoirs might not recharge the way that they normally expect them to and that could mean earlier drought conditions (and) another wildfire season that is like what we've seen this year," she said. "We are attempting to assess and understand what those long-term

Agriculture Minister Pam Alexis said the fires have resulted in a need for hay and grain to feed animals.

Some small-scale farmers are "wrestling with hard decisions" about selling some of their cattle, she said.

In Ontario, there are currently 39 active wildfires in the province's northwestern region, with six out of control, two being held, two under control and 29 being observed, according to the provincial government.

Quebec officials reported 101 active fires Tuesday afternoon, 22 of them in the more-populated southern half of the province. Much of the Saint Lawrence River Valley, including the Montreal area, and regions to its west and north, are subject to smog warnings as smoke from the fires in Western Canada drifted across the continent.

Environment Canada is meanwhile reporting that parts of the Northwest Territories are seeing record-breaking temperatures as heat waves sweep the country. Air-quality advisories have been issued for several communities across the territory due to wildfire smoke.

Life & Style

AS LAS VEGAS POLICE CONDUCT SEARCH

Tupac Shakur's long-unsolved killing again under spotlight

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Las Vegas police confirmed Tuesday that they served a search warrant this week in connection with the long-unsolved killing of Tupac Shakur, propelling the case back into the spotlight nearly 30 years after his death.

Shakur, one of the most prolific figures in hip-hop, was gunned down the night of Sept. 7, 1996, in a drive-by shooting in Las Vegas. He was 25.

No arrests have ever been made. Yet attention on the case, which has seen its share of conspiracy theories, has endured for decades.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department said in a statement that the search was conducted Monday in the nearby city of Henderson, but the agency did not say whether a suspect has been identified. It's also unclear what they were looking for and where they were looking.

Shakur

Citing the ongoing investigation, department spokesperson Aden OcampoGomez said in a brief phone call that he couldn't provide more details on the latest development in the case.

Nevada does not have a time limit for prosecuting homicide cases.

Shakur was shot while sitting inside a black BMW with Marion "Suge" Knight, head of Death Row Records. Police have said the two were waiting at a red light near the Las Vegas Strip when a white Cadillac pulled up next to them and gunfire erupted. Shot multiple times, Shakur was rushed to a hospital, where he died six days later.

Las Vegas police have said in the past that the investigation quickly stalled in part because witnesses refused to cooperate.

Shakur's death came amid his feud with rap rival the Notorious B.I.G., who was fatally shot six months later. At the time, both rappers were in the middle of the infamous East Coast-West Coast rivalry, which primarily defined the hip-hop scene during the mid-1990s. The feud was ignited after Shakur was seriously wounded in another shooting during a robbery in the lobby of a midtown Manhattan hotel.

Shakur openly accused B.I.G. and Sean "Diddy" Combs of having prior knowledge of the shooting, which both vehemently denied. It sparked enough of a feud that created a serious divide within the hip-hop community and fans.

The New York-born Shakur represented the West Coast after he signed with Los Angeles-based Death Row Records. He often traded verbal jabs in the media and through songs. B.I.G. and Combs hailed from the East Coast while representing New York City-based Bad Boy Records.

Largely considered one of the most influential and versatile rappers of all time, the six-time Grammy Award -nominated Shakur has had five No. 1 albums: 1995's "Me Against the World," 1996's "All Eyez on Me," and three posthumous releases: 1996's "The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory," which was recorded under the name Makaveli, as well as 2001's "Until the End of Time" and 2004's "Loyal to the Game."

His professional music career only lasted five years, but Shakur secured 21 Billboard Hot 100s, including top 10 hits "Dear Mama" and "Old School" in 1995, and his best-known track, 1996's "How Do U Want It/California Love" featuring K-Ci and JoJo. The latter spent two weeks at the No. 1 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 from his final studio album and Death Row Records debut, "All Eyez on Me."

According to entertainment data company Luminate, Shakur has sold 33 million albums, 41 million when including track sale and streaming equivalents. The rapper's on-demand video and audio streams total 10.1 billion.

In 2017, Shakur was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame by Snoop Dogg. In June of this year, the rapper received a posthumous star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He's also had some museum exhibits that paid homage to his life, including "Tupac Shakur. Wake Me When I'm Free," which opened in 2021.

Marilyn Manson to plead no contest to blowing his nose on videographer

CONCORD, N.H. (AP)—Marilyn Manson will plead no contest to blowing his nose on a videographer at a 2019 concert in New Hampshire, according to a filing by his attorney.

Manson

The rocker, whose legal name is Brian Warner, was charged with two misdemeanor counts of simple assault stemming from the encounter at the Bank of New Hampshire Pavilion in Gilford on Aug. 19, 2019.

A notice of intent filed Monday says that Manson is expected to plead no contest to only one charge, and that prosecutors would dismiss the other in the fully negotiated plea. A no contest plea means Manson will not contest the charge and does not admit guilt.

Manson would face a sentence of a $1,200 fine with part of it suspended and 20 hours of community service within six months. Manson also would need to remain arrest-free and notify local police of any New Hampshire performances for two years.

A judge would have to accept the plea, which is expected to be entered Thursday in Belknap County Superior Court. That's in place of a final pretrial hearing that was scheduled in advance of his planned Aug. 7 trial.

It's not clear whether Manson would be required to be in court or be allowed to participate via video. His lawyer, Kent Barker, said Tuesday it would be up to the judge.

According to a police affidavit, Manson approached videographer Susan Fountain in the venue's stage pit area, put his face close to her camera and spit a "big lougee" at her. She was struck on both hands with saliva. He also is accused approaching her a second time, blowing his nose on her arm and hands.

Prosecutors planned to dismiss the charge stemming from the first encounter, according to the notice.

Romanian court rules to keep Andrew Tate under house arrest as human trafficking case continues

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP)—A court in Romania's capital on Tuesday ruled to extend by another 30 days the house arrest of Andrew Tate, the divisive social media influencer who is charged with rape, human trafficking and forming a criminal gang to sexually exploit women.

The decision at the Bucharest Tribunal comes a month after prosecutors formally indicted the 36-year-old social media star along with his brother Tristan and two Romanian women in the same case. All four defendants—who were arrested in late December near Bucharest and have denied the allegations against them—will remain under house arrest for 30 more days.

Tate

Outside the court on Monday, Tate told journalists that "the moral arc of the universe bends towards justice in the end."

"My brother and I are extremely resilient people. … In the end justice shall be served," he said. "We're feeling like things are going to work out perfectly in the end—and until then we're going to follow the judicial process."

The Tate brothers, who are dual U.K.-U.S. citizens, will likely appeal against Tuesday's ruling. The Tates lost their last appeal on July 6 against a prior house arrest extension.

After spending three months in police detention in Bucharest, the Tate brothers won an appeal on March 31 to be moved to house arrest. In June, Romania's anti-organized crime agency known as DIICOT had requested that judges extend the house arrest measure after the agency filed its investigation.

Andrew Tate, who has been accused of peddling conspiracy theories online and has amassed 7.2 million Twitter followers, has repeatedly claimed that prosecutors have no evidence against him and that there is a political conspiracy designed to silence him.

Before the court's decision on Tuesday, a post appeared on his Twitter account that read: "There are Matrix agents on all sides of the political spectrum. War is funded. Trump and I are self funded. Basically everyone else is bought and paid for."

Family stretches finances to fund daughter's studies

DEAR ABBY: My daughter is attending a pricey college. She will be taking out the maximum of student loans, and we will slowly but surely eat through our entire savings to pay for it.

Her college hires resident assistants (RAs) to help freshmen adjust to college life. In return, the RAs receive free room and board. This would be a tremendous financial help to our family and might also allow us to pay off some of her unsubsidized loans next year.

My daughter has agreed to apply to be an RA for her junior year, but since then, she has become despondent. She says all her friends are moving off-campus and she'll be "stuck" in a freshman dorm. I am sympathetic to her concerns since the social aspect of college life is important. On the other hand, my husband and I are making tremendous sacrifices so she can go to her dream school.

She's generally outgoing, likes socializing and is temperamentally well-suited to an RA position. So, to be completely honest, I'm angry that she's viewing this opportunity as a burden rather than an opportunity to significantly improve her and our family's financial situation by taking a job that could be rewarding.

Am I wrong to ask my daughter to apply for this position? If we were a wealthy family, I would never ask, but we are not. I'm afraid she will face greater sacrifices down the road if she enters the work world with substantial debt.

NOT MADE OF MONEY IN NEW YORK

DEAR NOT MADE OF MONEY: Although your daughter is enrolled in a pricey college, she appears to be lacking in financial acumen. If she were more mature, she would recognize that this job would benefit your entire family. Because she isn't, it is up to you and her father to impress that fact upon her.

Of course socializing in college is important, but taking the RA position won't entirely preclude that. Being an RA would give her valuable leadership experience, which could help her in the future. Many graduates remember with great fondness the resident assistants they had in college and the guidance they provided.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My mother-in-law constantly calls my husband and is always reminding him not to forget her. If we don't answer the phone, she'll leave a message asking, "Where is my son?" Then she'll add, "Don't forget about your mother."

I'm tired of it, and my husband won't put a stop to it. He says she's his mother and he needs to respect her. I feel like even after all these years she hasn't cut the cord, and he is still attached. Any advice?

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

ANNOYED IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR ANNOYED: Your mother-in-law appears to be insecure and to crave more attention from her son. This has nothing to do with you, so my advice is to ignore any message that isn't meant for you, and try to be less critical. If being told not to forget his mother bothered your husband, he would deal with it. Trust me on that.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HERE'S A BUG PLODDING RESOLUTELY ACROSS THE DIRT.
PUT A ROCK IN HIS WAY, AND HE JUST GOES AROUND IT. FLIP HIM ON HIS BACK, AND HE RIGHTS HIMSELF AND CONTINUES ON HIS WAY. HE'S FOCUSED, DETERMINED, AND STEADFAST.
IF HE'S MOCKING ME, I'M GONNA GOOSH HIM.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

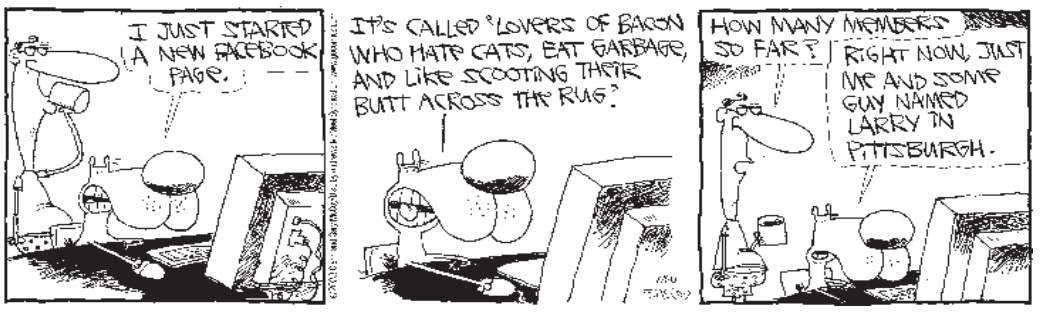
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SHH.
I'M HAVING A QUIET SUMMER MOMENT. I'M TAKING IT IN. LOGGING IT IN MY SOUL.
(SLOW INHALE)
HOW MANY YOO-HOOS DID YOU HAVE?
ENOUGH TO FEEL DEEPLY SPIRITUAL. AND A LITTLE LOOPY.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I JUST STARTED A NEW FACEBOOK PAGE.
IT'S CALLED "LOVERS OF BACON WHO HATE CATS, EAT GARBAGE, AND LIKE SCOOTING THEIR BUTT ACROSS THE RUG."
HOW MANY MEMBERS SO FAR?
RIGHT NOW, JUST ME AND SOME GUY NAMED LARRY IN PITTSBURGH.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

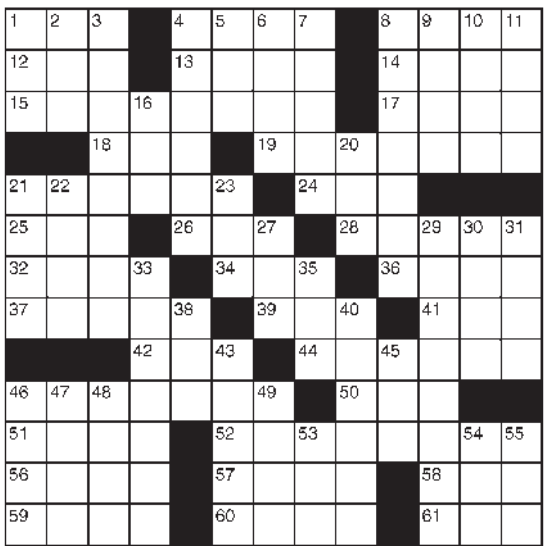
ACROSS
1 Observe
4 Milky gem
8 Seductress
12 Layer
13 Nada
14 Tend texts
15 Book part
17 Latvia's capital
18 Pierced body part
19 Atlantic fish
21 Largest U.S. state
24 SSW opposite
25 Roman 1004
26 Yearbook gp.
28 Peaks of Peru
32 Experts
34 Pear-shaped fruit
36 Has a cold
37 Shopping centers
39 Train alternative
41 Nov. honoree
42 Scale members
44 Roman garments
46 Math statement
50 Crummy
51 Holler
52 Squander
56 Cover of gloom
57 Concerning
58 Silent assent
59 Greek vowels
60 Sports figure?
61 ER workers

DOWN
1 "Ain't — Sweet"
2 Still, in verse
3 Try
4 Arkansas range
5 Zing
6 War god
7 Actress Sophia
8 Fragrant plant
9 Sarah McLachlan hit
10 Russian jets
11 Sch. supporters
16 — de deux
20 Navarro of "The View"
21 Clock radio toggle
22 Old money of Rome
23 Canine greeting
27 Bro or sis
29 Payment to a shareholder
30 Power co. supply
31 Bygone fliers
33 Casual walks
35 Belly
38 Sun. talk
40 Group within a group
43 Big rigs
45 Snooze
46 Ilk
47 Warmth
48 Jazzy Fitzgerald
49 Gum flavor
53 Madrid Mrs.
54 Fish-fowl insert
55 License to drill?

Solution time: 24 mins.

U	N	O	■	B	E	M	S	■	E	T	T	U
M	A	P	■	F	I	S	F	■	A	S	I	S
P	T	A	■	F	I	N	A	I	S	A	I	F
S	O	I	A	R	■	■	R	A	F	■	■	■
■	■	■	N	F	C	K	■	P	I	A	Z	A
C	E	N	G	S	I	I	U	I	■	S	L	C	W
A	I	F	■	H	F	N	N	A	■	F	S	F
D	O	O	R	■	C	I	L	M	S	C	T	S
S	I	N	A	I	■	S	A	A	B	■	■	■
■	■	■	I	M	S	■	■	D	A	I	S	Y
F	A	I	R	S	H	A	K	F	■	T	H	F
A	L	T	A	■	C	S	A	U	■	R	U	N
B	A	S	H	■	D	A	Y	S	■	Y	F	S

Yesterday's answer 7-20



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Julianne Hough, 35; Judy Greer, 48; Josh Holloway, 54; Carlos Santana, 76.

Happy Birthday: Sort your expenses and set a budget that eases stress and keeps you moving forward financially. Don't count on others to take care of responsibilities that belong to you. Use this year to complete unfinished business and to find unique ways to up your game and get ahead. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain by focusing on being and doing your best. Your numbers are 3, 11, 16, 22, 28, 35, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Take the initiative and prove yourself to the powers that be, and you will make headway and a difference. Don't make a hasty financial move. Let your instincts be your guide and your intelligence lead the way. Self-improvement will not go unnoticed. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Keep things in perspective. Don't feel like you have to follow the crowd or make promises that are difficult to honor. Put your energy into taking care of your responsibilities and happiness. Too much of anything will weigh you down and upset your budget. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Spend time with loved ones or fixing up your space to suit your lifestyle. Don't let what others do or say upset you. Let your free-thinking attitude shine, and do what makes you happy. Fix up your space, but don't go over budget. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Get in touch with long-lost friends. Attend a reunion, set new goals and research how to get where you want to go. Use your intuition to help you make better decisions instead of relying on someone else to guide you. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Don't let what others do stand in your way or disrupt your day. Head in a direction that puts a smile on your face. Put your energy into doing the best job and earning your keep. Challenge yourself and learn from the experience. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Don't deny yourself when the possibilities are endless. Take a stance and strategically move to help eliminate instability and emotional uncertainty. Ask questions, and you'll discover workable solutions. It's your move; make it count. Invest in yourself and your future. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Distance yourself from pushy individuals and uncomfortable situations. Reach out to those who share your concerns, beliefs and integrity. If you are true to yourself, keep life simple and maintain a strict budget, there is plenty to gain. Aim to make a difference. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Let your actions speak for you. If you say too much or allude to something untrue, you will discredit yourself and miss an opportunity to grow. Don't try to impress others; become the conduit of your happiness and success. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Refuse to let your emotions or a situation someone puts you in dictate what happens next. Voice your opinion and be prepared to do your own thing. Trust and believe in yourself, and you will find the path that best suits your needs. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Rethink how you earn and manage your money. With some ingenuity and lifestyle changes, you can lower your stress and maximize your ability to enjoy what life offers. Alter your living conditions and thrive. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Be willing to listen, but don't sign up for something that doesn't interest you to please others. Someone will offer false information to grab your attention. Read the fine print before deciding to get involved. Invest in yourself. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Concentrate on responsibilities and how to use your skills and experience to advance. Say no to temptation and people trying to reroute you down a path you cannot afford. Protect your position, reputation and future. Don't get trapped in the past; move forward. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are friendly, helpful and creative. You are hardworking and resourceful.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

9						2		
	3		2		1		6	
	4		6	7			3	5
4				6				
3	8		9			6	1	
	5				4	9		
5				1		4	9	
	7	8					5	2
			8	2				

Difficulty: ★★★ 7/20

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesturday's Answer

5	4	2	8	1	3	7	6	9
1	9	3	6	2	7	4	5	8
7	8	6	9	5	4	2	3	1
9	5	4	7	6	1	8	2	3
3	6	7	2	8	5	1	9	4
2	1	8	4	3	9	5	7	6
4	7	5	3	9	8	6	1	2
6	3	1	5	4	2	9	8	7
8	2	9	1	7	6	3	4	5

Difficulty: ★★★ 7/19

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

SHARPEN YOUR PENCIL **Solution: 9 letters**

S	E	N	T	E	N	C	E	T	I	H	P	A	R	G
T	C	E	U	N	S	R	S	G	N	I	V	A	H	S
O	I	G	N	M	I	S	E	R	U	T	C	I	P	C
R	R	O	D	C	B	R	A	T	Ⓣ	Ⓔ	Ⓢ	Ⓣ	A	R
Y	P	T	E	U	O	E	P	Y	T	N	D	F	R	I
H	H	I	R	R	S	U	R	S	O	E	L	A	G	P
P	P	A	L	S	H	A	T	I	A	X	L	R	A	T
A	A	T	I	I	C	U	T	L	R	A	E	D	R	E
R	R	E	N	V	D	A	S	E	I	M	P	I	A	E
G	G	D	E	E	L	T	R	D	Y	N	S	A	P	H
I	O	I	N	U	P	E	S	T	R	E	E	R	N	S
L	T	T	C	L	A	S	S	I	O	O	B	Y	E	K
L	U	L	A	N	R	U	O	J	W	O	C	R	R	R
A	A	S	S	I	G	N	M	E	N	T	N	E	O	O
C	O	M	M	U	N	I	C	A	T	E	T	I	R	W

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Assignment, Autograph, Calculations, Calligraphy, Cartoon, Class, Communicate, Cursive, Deals, Diary, Draft, Edit, Essay, Exam, Eyebrow, Graphite, Journal, Letter, Negotiate, Number, Outline, Paragraph, Picture, Price, Print, Record, Script, Sentence, Shavings, Spell, Story, Student, Test, Twist, Underline, Worksheet, Write

Yesterday's Answer: Permits

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Diamondbacks end 4-game skid by outlasting Braves, 16-13

ATLANTA (AP)—Geraldo Perdomo gave Arizona the lead with a two-run double in the ninth inning and the Diamondbacks took advantage of Atlanta's worst pitching effort of the season to beat the Braves 16-13 on Tuesday night.

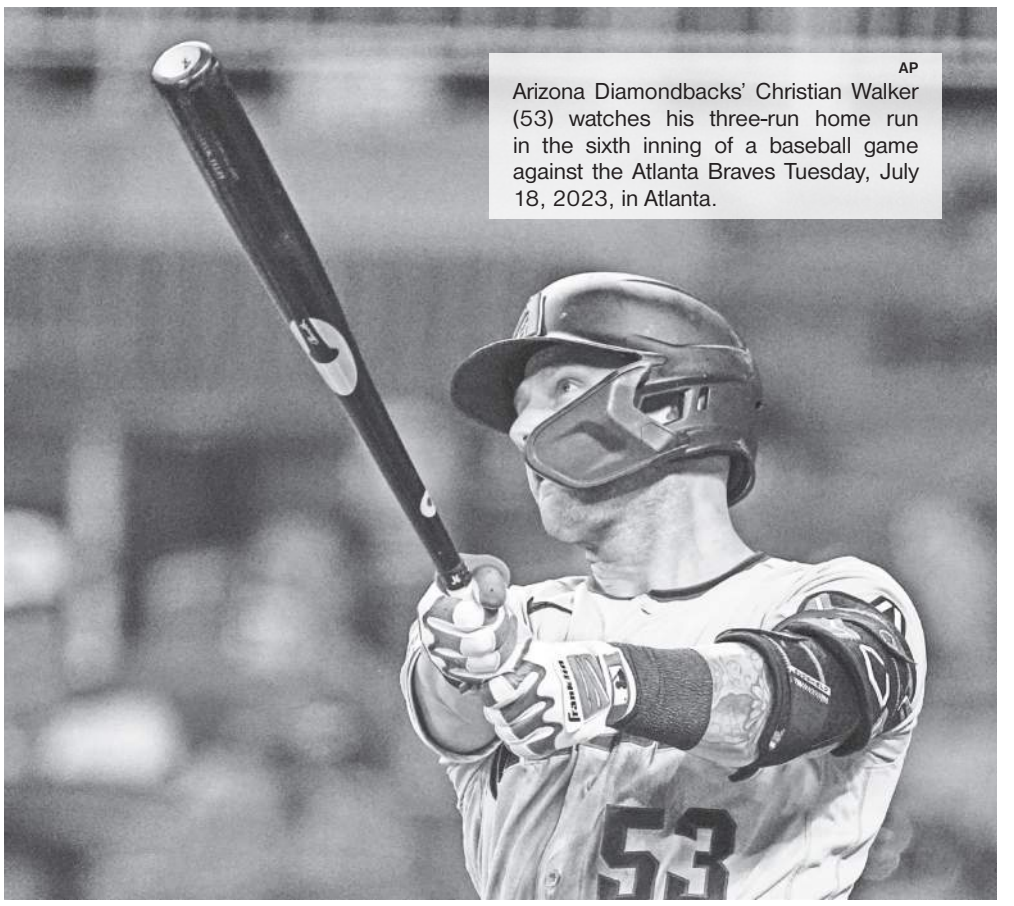
It was Arizona's first game in which each team had at least 13 runs and the first in the majors since the Chicago White Sox beat the Cubs 17-13 on Aug. 27, 2021.

The NL East-leading Braves have lost three straight. Arizona snapped a four-game losing streak.

Christian Walker homered twice and had three hits and five RBIs for Arizona. Corbin Carroll had two hits, scored three runs and drove in two.

Miguel Castro (5-3) pitched a scoreless eighth and Kevin Ginkel struck out the side in the ninth for his first save.

With the game tied at 13, Arizona pinch-hitter Jake McCarthy led off the ninth with a bloop single off Braves closer Raisel Iglesias (3-4).



AP

Arizona Diamondbacks' Christian Walker (53) watches his three-run home run in the sixth inning of a baseball game against the Atlanta Braves Tuesday, July 18, 2023, in Atlanta.

RANGERS 5, RAYS 3

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—All-Star right-hander Nathan Eovaldi pitched two-hit ball over six scoreless innings and matched the major league lead with his 11th victory as the AL West-leading Texas beat Tampa Bay.

Marcus Semien and Corey Seager homered for the Rangers (57-39), whose fifth consecutive victory since the break matched their season-best winning streak.

Eovaldi (11-3) struck out two, walked three and hit a batter, though the Rays stranded six runners on base against him. Will Smith, the third Texas reliever, worked a perfect ninth for his 17th save in 19 chances.

Randy Arozarena and Brandon Lowe went deep for the Rays (60-38), who still have the AL's best record and a one-game lead over Baltimore in the AL East despite losing their last three games. They have lost 10 of 13 overall in July.

DODGERS 10, ORIOLES 3

BALTIMORE (AP)—Jason Heyward hit a three-run homer during a five-run second inning, and Los Angeles routed Baltimore.

Michael Grove won his second outing in a row for the NL West-leading Dodgers, who picked up their eighth victory in nine games.

Aaron Hicks drove in two runs for Baltimore, which has lost on back-to-back nights to Los Angeles after entering the series on an eight-game winning streak. The Orioles, who began the night trailing first-place Tampa Bay by one game in the AL East, need to win Wednesday to avoid being swept for the first time this season.

Wells (7-5) was pitching for the first time in 10 days and lasted two innings, his shortest outing of the season. He allowed five runs and struck out two.

GIANTS 4, REDS 2, 10 INNINGS, comp. of susp. game; GIANTS 11, REDS 10

CINCINNATI (AP)—Casey Schmitt drew a bases-loaded walk that forced home the go-ahead run in a three-run seventh inning, and San Francisco beat Cincinnati twice for a seven-game winning streak.

The suspended game was 2-2 when interrupted with one out in the top of the eighth after a wait of 1:55. With automatic runner Brett Wisely on second, Joc Pederson drove a pitch from Ian Gibaut (8-2) that hit the left-field wall on a hop. Pederson advanced on Wilmer Flores' groundout and scored when Michael Conforto hit a sharp grounder.

Reds rookie Elly De La Cruz, in a 1-for-19 slide, had walked leading off the ninth against Tyler Rogers (3-4). De La Cruz stole his 17th base.

In the second game, delayed by rain for 1 hours, 11 minutes at the start, Luke Weaver allowed four runs and four hits in 2 2/3 innings. With the score 8-8, Mike Yastrzemski walked against Buck Farmer (2-4) with one out in the seventh and Blake Sabol singled with two outs.

After Scott Alexander (6-0) struck out two in a one-hit sixth, Jakob Junis allowed Joey Votto's homer in the seventh. Camilo Doval earned his 30th save in 32 chances, his second of the day.

PADRES 9, BLUE JAYS 1

TORONTO (AP)—Juan Soto hit a two-run homer and Joe Musgrove pitched six sharp innings to win his eighth straight decision.

Manny Machado, Gary Sánchez and Trent Grisham each hit solo homers for the Padres, who ended a three-game skid.

Musgrove (9-2) allowed one run and five hits. He walked one and struck out seven.

PHILLIES 4, BREWERS 3

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Aaron Nola struck out six in 7 1/3 innings, Kyle Schwarber homered and Philadelphia moved a season-best 10 games over .500.

Bryson Stott, Trea Turner and Alec Bohm each had two hits to help the defending NL champion Phillies improve to 52-42 with their fourth consecutive victory. Philadelphia began play a half-game out of a playoff spot. All nine Phillies starters had at least one hit.

Andruw Monasterio had two hits and drove in a run for the NL Central-leading Brewers. Milwaukee had won four in a row.

ROCKIES 4, ASTROS 3

DENVER (AP) — Ezequiel Tovar lined a go-ahead triple in the fourth and Colorado won a bullpen game using seven pitchers.

This had all the hallmarks of a high-scoring Coors Field affair when it was 3-3 after the first inning. But the pitching took over and the only run allowed after the early fireworks was courtesy of Tovar, who lined a shot off the fence in right-center to score C.J. Cron.

Reliever Jake Bird was roughed up for three runs as he opened the game on the mound for the Rockies. From there, the bullpen surrendered just five hits. Fernando Abad (1-0) earned the win by recording four outs. Justin Lawrence picked up save No. 6 with a perfect ninth.

CARDINALS 5, MARLINS 2, 10 INNINGS

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Nolan Arenado's three-run homer in the 10th inning lifted St. Louis over a slumping Miami.

Arenado's homer off A.J. Puk (4-4) was his first game-ending homer since August 14, 2019, and the fourth of his career.

JoJo Romero (2-0) pitched a perfect 10th for the Cardinals, who have won four straight games.

The Marlins have lost five straight, matching a season high from May 2-6.

Cardinals starter Jordan Montgomery threw 92 pitches in his return after leaving his last start on July 7 with right hamstring tightness. He allowed one run and six hits, struck out five and walked two.

ATHLETICS 3, RED SOX 0

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Ryan Noda and JJ Bleday homered in the second inning and Oakland ended an eight-game losing streak.

Noda, who was 14-for-86 over his previous 25 games, homered off Boston starter Joe Jacques (1-1) leading off the second. After Aledmys Díaz reached on an infield single and advanced to second on a throwing error by shortstop Yu Chang, Bleday hit his sixth homer and first off a left-hander this season.

Luis Medina (3-7) allowed three hits in 5 2/3 innings for his first win since June 10. Medina made a nice play on a comebacker in the second, pitched out of a jam with a runner on second in the fourth, then struck out the side swinging in the fifth.

Trevor May, the A's fourth reliever, got the final three outs for his seventh save.

ANGELS 5, YANKEES 1

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Shohei Ohtani had an RBI triple, Mickey Moniak hit a two-run homer and Patrick Sandoval pitched two-hit ball into the eighth inning of Los Angeles' victory over New York.

Moniak had three hits and drove in three runs for the Angels, who have won three of four after a six-game skid. With its first series victory since June 16-18 against Kansas City, Los Angeles is back at .500 while attempting to make enough progress this month in the AL postseason race to justify keeping Ohtani.

Gleyber Torres' third-inning homer was New York's only hit until Anthony Volpe's one-out single finally chased Sandoval (5-7). The Yankees are 1-4 on their trip out of the break, losing both series in Denver and Anaheim.

TWINS 10, MARINERS 3

SEATTLE (AP)—Alex Kirilloff was a double shy of the cycle, Bailey Ober was sharp after a difficult first inning, and Minnesota defeated Seattle.

Ober (6-4) allowed three runs on six hits in the first inning alone, including a two-run homer, but was efficient for the final five innings, allowing just one more hit. Ober struck out five while walking none and now has six consecutive quality starts.

Relievers Jordan Balazovic, Emilio Pagán and Cole Sands limited Seattle to two hits after Ober's exit.

Bryan Woo (1-2) had his shortest outing since his debut on June 3, lasting only 3 1/3 innings on 87 pitches. The rookie was on an impressive streak, allowing no more than two runs in his last six starts before Minnesota tacked on seven runs on eight hits.

GUARDIANS 10, PIRATES 1

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Josh Naylor homered twice, including a three-run shot that keyed a five-run first inning against All-Star Mitch Keller, and drove in six runs and Cleveland rolled over Pittsburgh.

Rookie left-hander Logan Allen (4-2) pitched five scoreless innings of one-hit ball after being recalled from Triple-A Columbus prior to the game. The lone hit was a one-out single in the fifth inning by Jared Triolo, who extended his hitting streak to 11 games. Allen struck out eight and walked one.

Keller (9-5) was tagged for eight runs and 10 hits in six innings.

Josh Bell hit a two-run homer in the third, his 10th of the year.

Connor Joe's solo homer in the sixth inning off Eli Morgan accounted for the Pirates' lone run.

CUBS 17, NATIONALS 3

CHICAGO (AP)—Seiya Suzuki homered and drove in three runs on a four-hit night, and Chicago poured it on late to beat Washington.

Patrick Wisdom hit his team-leading 17th homer in the seventh inning to put the Cubs ahead 4-3, and Chicago went on to score five more runs in the seventh and eight in the eighth.

Amaya had a two-run single to cap Chicago's seventh-inning outburst against relievers Amos Willingham (0-2) and Jose Ferrer.

The Cubs sent 13 men to the plate in the eighth. Nico Hoerner had two RBI singles in the frame.

Michael Fulmer (1-5), the first Chicago reliever, got four outs — three via strikeout.

METS 11, WHITE SOX 10

NEW YORK (AP)—David Robertson retired Tim Anderson on a game-ending flyout that stranded runners on second and third, and New York beat Chicago after building a seven-run lead behind a pair of Francisco Álvarez home runs.

Álvarez and fellow rookie Brett Baty hit consecutive home runs off Lucas Giolito (6-6) as the Mets took a 5-0 lead in their highest-scoring first inning this season. Álvarez added another two-run homer in the sixth off Tanner Banks for his third multihomer game. Giolito gave up a season-high eight runs, one shy of his career high,

Grant Hartwig (2-1) gave up two runs in 1 2/3 innings. New York won for the eighth time in 12 games.

ROYALS 11, TIGERS 10

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Dairon Blanco tripled, doubled twice, singled and drove in three runs and Kansas City overcame Spencer Torkelson's two-homer night to beat Detroit.

Daniel Lynch (3-4) completed five innings, allowing five runs on six hits and two walks. He struck out three.

Detroit left two runners on base after scoring four in the ninth against Scott Barlow.

Detroit's Tarik Skubal (0-1) made his third start of the season after missing almost a year after surgery on his left elbow. He allowed seven runs on eight hits, striking out three over four innings.

Vingegaard closer to victory after sensational time trial extends lead

COMBLOUX, France (AP) — Defending champion Jonas Vingegaard may have time-trialed his way to a second straight Tour de France victory.

A sensational time trial from Vingegaard on Tuesday saw the overall leader extend his advantage over two-time winner Tadej Pogačar to nearly two minutes with just five stages remaining — including Sunday's largely ceremonial, final procession to Paris.

"No, there's still a lot of hard stages to come so we have to keep fighting the next days," Vingegaard said when asked if the race had already been decided. "And yeah, we're looking forward to it.

"I'm really, really happy with the victory today and really proud of it. It's my first time trial victory in the Tour de France. So, yeah, I'm really proud."

Vingegaard, who rides for the Jumbo-Visma team, started the day only 10 seconds ahead of Pogačar after little could separate the duo in a fascinating duel over the last two weeks.

However, when it came down to a direct head-to-head battle, Vingegaard was in a class of his own.

The Danish cyclist finished the 22.4-kilometer (14-mile) hilly route from Passy to Combloux 1 minute, 38 seconds ahead of Pogačar. Wout van Aert was third at the end of the 16th stage, 2:51 behind Vingegaard.

The 26-year-old Vingegaard now leads Pogačar by 1:48 overall and it will take something equally sensational from the Slovenian cyclist to wrest the yellow jersey from his rival. Adam Yates moved into third overall, almost nine minutes behind Vingegaard.

AP

Stage winner and overall leader Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard reacts after the sixteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race, an individual time trial over 22.5 kilometers (14 miles) with start in Passy and finish in Combloux, France, Tuesday, July 18, 2023.

Riders face a mammoth mountain stage, the hardest of the race, on Wednesday. The last of four climbs of the 17th stage is a 28.4-kilometer (17.6-mile) slog up Col de la Loze, before sweeping downhill to the Courchevel ski station which hosts World Cup slalom races.

Tuesday's time trial had been seen as a potential tie-breaker but few could have imagined such a large gap.

"I think today I even surprised myself with the time trial I did. I didn't expect to do so well," Vingegaard said.

Pogačar himself put in an impressive performance and flew through the first time check 26 seconds up on the rest of the field. However, Vingegaard — who had rolled down the ramp last — was 16 seconds faster than Pogačar at that point, after just 7.1 kilometers, and had extended that to 30 seconds after 12 kilometers of racing.

Pogačar opted to change from his time-trial bike to a lightweight road bike at the foot of the second-category climb, with 5.3 kilometers remaining, and that helped him on the ascent. But he was unable to match an extraordinary ride from Vingegaard, who could almost see his rival on the approach to the finish line, such was his time gain.

Van Aert took his cap off to his teammate and smiled at the camera.

"It's hard to understand what happened because it was extraordinary," Van Aert said. "But we've seen it throughout the whole Tour — those two are just so much stronger than the rest. In the end, I'm happy to make it into the top three.

"It's a positive step forwards to secure yellow. We're looking really good ... The stages in the next few days will be tough and crucial. Now we need to recover and make sure we're ready for tomorrow."

Hornets' Bridges apologizes for 'pain and embarrassment'

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Charlotte Hornets forward Miles Bridges apologized Tuesday for "the pain and embarrassment" caused by the domestic violence investigation that kept him out of the league last season.

Bridges, speaking publicly for the first time since signing a one-year, $7.9 million contract to return to the Hornets, vowed to rebuild relationships with teammates and become more active in the Charlotte community.

He pleaded no contest in November to a felony charge that stemmed from accusations that he assaulted the mother of his children in front of them. The 25-year-old was sentenced to three years of probation.

"I want to apologize to everybody for the pain and embarrassment that I have caused everyone, especially my family," Bridges said. "This year away I've used to prioritize going to therapy and becoming the best person I can be — someone that my family and everyone here can be proud of."

Following a lengthy investigation, the NBA handed down a 30-game suspension earlier this offseason, but determined that he'll only miss 10 games to start the upcoming season after giving him credit for 20 games served after sitting out 82 games last season.

Bridges thanked the Hornets organization and the NBA for giving him a second chance, adding that "a lot of people don't get a second chance, and I want to use this second chance to prove to everyone that I'm the same kid you drafted five years ago."

Hornets general manager Mitch Kupchak said outgoing majority owner Michael Jordan and incoming owners Gabe Plotkin and Rick Schnall gave unanimous approval to re-sign Bridges.

Kupchak said that decision was based on separate investigations by the NBA and the Los Angeles Police Department, as well as the team's personal five-year relationship with Bridges. Bridges was drafted in the first round in 2018 and has played four seasons in Charlotte.

"You have to make a judgment, right?" Kupchak said. "Is this sincere remorse? Is this sincere accountability? It is not something that is easy to judge. We took all of those factors into consideration and ultimately gave him a second chance."

Kupchak said he realizes that decision may not sit well with some fans.

"Obviously it is a polarizing topic," Kupchak said. "Everybody may not agree. It's a tough situation to be in."

Bridges said he understands he'll need to regain the trust of everyone involved, from fans to teammates to members of the Hornets organization.

"Yes, I understand that some people don't think I deserve a second chance," Bridges said. "That's why I am trying to use this year to prove to everybody the person that I am. Who is Miles Bridges? It's not what people think he is."

Added Kupchak: "He understands that even though his teammates are happy to have him back, there is some trust that needs to be earned back."

Bridges declined to get into specifics, other than to say he continues to attend therapy and has a good relationship with his young children.

Bridges' NBA career took an abrupt turn last summer.

After a career season in 2021-22 in which he averaged a team-high 20.2 points and seven rebounds, Bridges appeared likely to sign a multi-year contract worth more than $100 million as a restricted free agent. But just days before the start of free agency the mother of his children posted graphic photos and descriptions of alleged physical abuse by Bridges on her Instagram page.

He was charged with three counts of felony domestic violence days later.

The big contract offer never came, and Bridges did not play at all last season as the NBA opened an investigation.

By signing the Hornets' qualifying offer, Bridges is eligible to become an unrestricted free agent next summer giving him more flexibility in his next destination.

The Hornets will still have Bridges' Bird rights, which gives them a competitive advantage over other teams because of their ability to offer him a longer contract worth more money. Bridges said Tuesday he'd like to remain with the Hornets.

But Kupchak said that will be a discussion for another day.

"We will have to wait to see how that plays out," Kupchak said. "From a basketball point of view, putting aside the serious nature of what took place, we are excited to have him back. He had his best year ever two years ago. Whatever it is we have to deal with a year from now, we will deal with it a year from now."

Charlotte recently selected forward Brandon Miller from Alabama with the No. 2 pick in the NBA draft and he could serve as an eventual replacement for Bridges.

Suns trade Payne to Spurs, sign Bol to 1-year contract

PHOENIX (AP)—The Phoenix Suns have traded guard Cameron Payne to the San Antonio Spurs and signed big man Bol Bol to a one-year contract, a person familiar with the moves told The Associated Press.

The Suns also acquired three second-round draft picks from the Orlando Magic for a swap of first-round picks in the 2026 NBA draft, the person said Sunday on condition of anonymity because the deals have not been officially announced.

Phoenix was expected to have a quiet offseason after trading for Bradley Beal, but has been active while trying to build a roster around him, Devin Booker and Kevin Durant.

The Suns traded Payne with a second-round pick and cash to the Spurs for a future protected second-round pick in a deal that will clear salary cap space.

That cleared the way for Phoenix to sign Bol, who was released by Orlando earlier this month. The 7-foot-2 son of former NBA player Manute Bol averaged 9.1 points and 5.8 points last season after three years in Denver.

Payne played a key reserve role on a Suns team that went to the 2021 NBA Finals. The 6-1 guard averaged 10.8 points and 4.5 assists last season, his fourth in Phoenix.

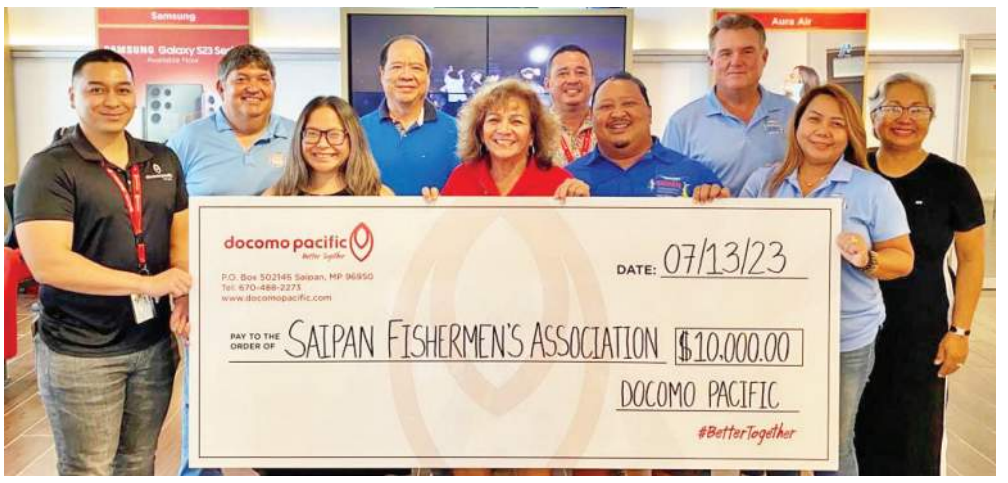
The Suns were busy at the opening of free agency late last month, agreeing to terms with sharpshooter Yuta Watanabe, big men Chimezie Metu and Drew Eubanks, and wing Keita Bates-Diop.

All set for Saipan Int'l Fishing Tournament this weekend

The Saipan Fishermen's Association will hold the 39th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament this weekend, July 22 and 23.

Organizers are anticipating about 80 boats from around the Marianas to join the event, including about 10 boats and crews from Guam.

Prizes will be awarded for first to third place in each of five game fish categories: Billfish, yellowfin, wahoo, mahi mahi, and skipjack. Prizes will also be awarded for total weight and grand prize for the biggest marlin.



SFA

Saipan Fishermen's Association officials accept Docomo Pacific's $10,000 sponsorship donation for this weekend's 39th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament.

SFA

Saipan Fishermen's Association officials accept MARPAC's $7,000 sponsorship donation for this weekend's 39th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament.

SFA

Saipan Fishermen's Association officials accept Atkins Kroll Saipan's $1,000 sponsorship donation for this weekend's 39th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament.

"The SFA is fortunate to host fishermen from Guam and the CNMI for an exciting two-day tournament," said SFA president Tony Scragg. He added, "This is an event that brings together the community—especially families—to come out and cheer for all the participants."

The tournament registration cost is $150 per boat, inclusive of a captain and one crewmember. Each additional angler is $35.

Pre-registration will be held at Smiling Cove Marina on Friday, July 21, from 4pm to 6pm, where SFA will provide a tournament briefing. The tournament will begin at 6am and end at 6pm on July 22 and July 23.

The SFA will host an awards ceremony on Monday, July 24, at 6pm at Kensington Hotel Saipan. Non-tournament participants may attend for $35 per person.

The SFA will produce a souvenir tournament program booklet, to be provided to all participating captains. Tournament entry forms, rules, and schedule of events are now at the Marianas Visitors Authority office on Beach Road in Garapan and at Fishing Tackle & Sporting Goods on Beach Road, Susupe, Saipan.

For more information about the event, contact MVA Community Projects specialist Ray Villagomez at (670) 664-3200 or email rvillagomez@mymarianas.com. ***(PR)***

LA HUNN

From page 20

"We had a rough start in this POJC but in the end we did pretty well. Anytime you can grab a singles title here is a good year."

Fortunately the good times didn't stop there.

"The first and second place in the boys 14 doubles is icing on the cake. Also the boys 12 which is a team event did really well. They ultimately placed fourth, but were only two points from beating Vanuatu in pool play and finishing first in their pool and could've beaten Guam for third. I'm really proud of their performance," he added.

Race was assisted in the POJC in Fiji by Colin Ramsey, former POJC campaigner himself and currently the No. 1 singles player in the Commonwealth.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Henry Seungwoo Choi, left, and June Yu receive their boys 14 doubles trophies after finishing second in the age group during the awards ceremony of the 2023 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships yesterday in Lautoka, Fiji.

PAYDAY

From page 20

ning just as Dat's It scored seven more in two innings. It was a home run frenzy as T.J. Cruz hit two home runs and J.D. Dikito hit his second of the game.

Two runs came in the fourth for Dat's It and wrapped the game up early in the fifth inning when they scored four more runs.

Ready Mix 13, Mamaaw 9

Ready Mix woke up from the dead in the last innings as they took down Mamaaw, 13-9.

After four scoreless innings, Ready Mix scored four in the fifth inning to tie up the game.

Mamaaw scored three more in the next inning from back-to-back RBI doubles from J.J. Lifoifoi, Jonathan Norita, and Keoni Serrano, but Ready Mix came back with a vengeance in the same inning.

Ready Mix ended up scoring eight runs to overtake the lead by a lot and just for good measure, Greg Iskawa scored their last run via a home run in the last inning.

Saipal 12, No Choice 8

Saipal defeated No Choice, 12-8.

Saipal drew first blood as they scored two in the first inning, followed by three in the second, then one in the third.

No Choice didn't retaliate until the third inning with three runs, then added three more in the fifth.

Saipal's Troy Camacho then hit a home run which started a six-run fifth inning which ended in another home run by Dennis Cruz. Dominic Hideo, their pitcher, had two home runs of his own.

No Choice ended their scoring with home runs as well—one from Bennett Williams and one from Reid Teregeyo.

Just 4 Fun 26, Blue Jays 5

It was a one-sided game as Just 4 Fun had a field day against the Blue Jays, 26-5, and called it quits early.

Just 4 Fun tacked on 15 runs in the second inning after a nine run first inning. Contrastly, the Blue Jays scored five runs in the third inning as the game ended there.

No Excuse 21, Aimeliik Bat Boys 0

No Excuse had no excuse but to win as they blanked the Aimeliik Bat Boys, 21-0.

It was like a home run derby as eight home runs were hit by No Excuse. Four runs came in the first inning, one in the second, six in the third, and then 10 in the last inning.

Kebruka 10, TuTuRamZ 7

Kebruka beat TuTuRamZ, 10-7.

Runs came scattered for Kebruka and had scored all 10 of their runs by the fourth inning.

TuTuRamz couldn't stage a comeback though as they only scored their seventh run by the last inning and lost by three runs.

FORMER

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tified and licensed. I studied building and home inspection at Douglas College and I'm presently connected with Tribes Management as a building maintenance consultant and coordinator. I am also currently working part-time at the UPS Canada Vancouver Hub as AMA Level 3, in charge of payroll and HR processing as well as working at the UPS Plant Engineering and Industrial Engineering operations."

Pamintuan shared that his better half, Ruby, passed away last year on Oct. 30, but before moving to Canada spent their formative family years on Saipan.

"We were blessed to have stayed on Saipan for 18 years. My most cherished memory of our island life was being blessed to finally marry my wife and start a family in the beautiful island of Saipan.

It was while owning a business on Saipan that Pamintuan won the nomination for most successful Filipino Proprietor and Businessman for the Pinoy Abroad program of Philippine TV station, GMA 7. This was mainly due to RP Construction being a certified and qualified general contractor for the U.S. government and federally funded projects.

Currently, Pamintuan's children are all grown up with Roby now 31 years old and working as a sales manager in one of the biggest architectural finish products and moldings suppliers in Canada.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Roland Pamintuan with a photo of his family in Canada before his wife and former Bayani Association official Ruby's passing.

Ricci, who is 28 years old, is a successful YouTube content creator (Tothe9s) and a business owner.

Pamintuan's next goal is to fulfill his wife's wish of visiting Saipan and reunite with old friends and beloved family members.

"To all my families, relatives, friends, former employees, and business associates on Saipan, the priceless memories and island life's experiences I have shared with you all in the beautiful island of Saipan will always be God's blessings that I will hold dear in my heart wherever I may be and I sincerely hope that I may be given the opportunity to visit the island once again and get reconnected with its amazing people and once again embrace its wonderful history."

Diamondbacks end 4-game skid by outlasting Braves, 16-13.

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All set for Saipan Int'l Fishing Tournament this weekend.

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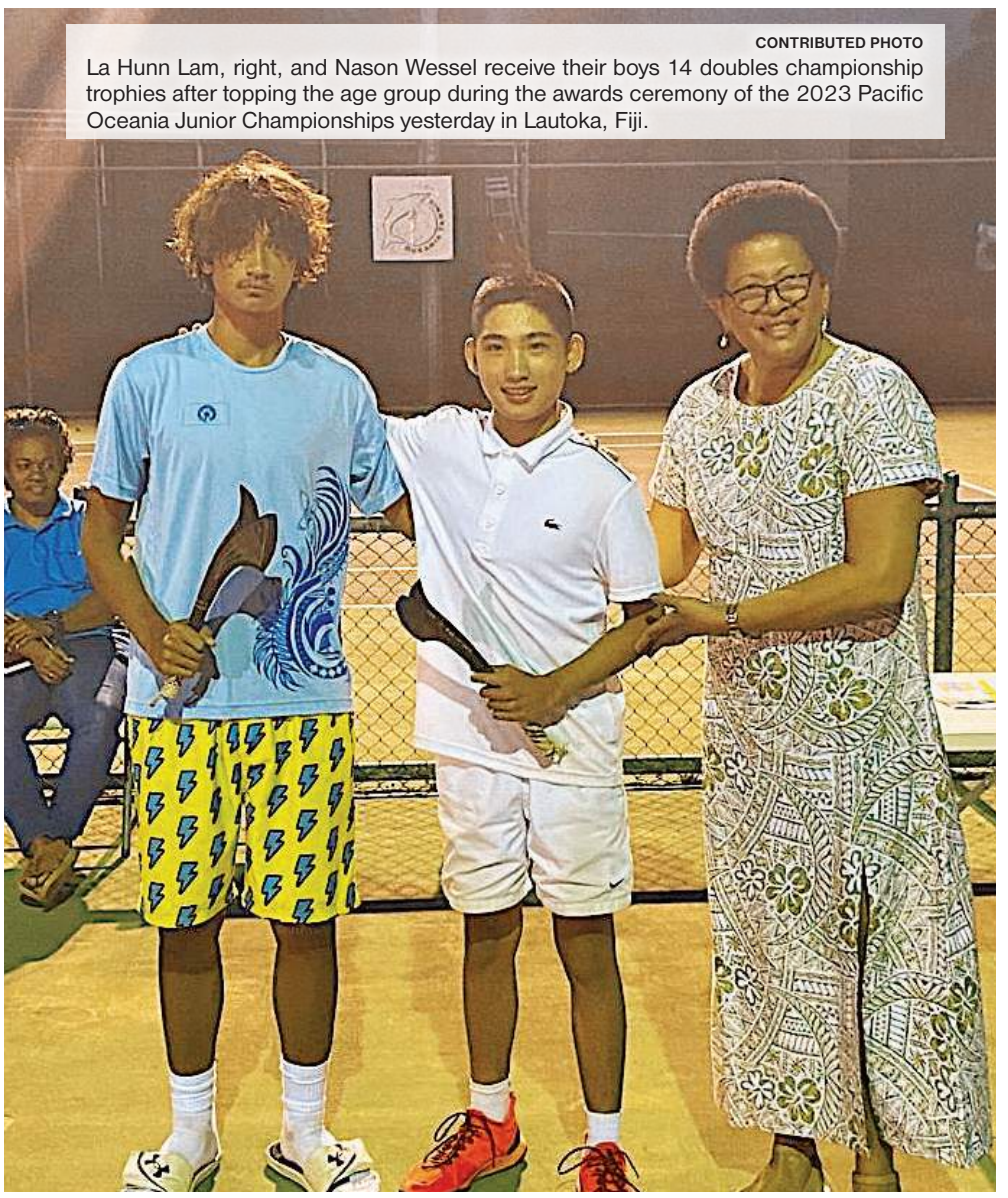
La Hunn, Nason win boys 14 doubles



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

La Hunn Lam, right, and Nason Wessel receive their boys 14 doubles championship trophies after topping the age group during the awards ceremony of the 2023 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships yesterday in Lautoka, Fiji.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI's boys 14 doubles team of La Hunn Lam and Nason Wessel won their division in the 2023 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships yesterday in Lautoka, Fiji.

Lam and Wessel, the No. 1 seeds, won an all-CNMI finale in the boys 14 doubles after beating Ryan Choi and Siwoo Lee, 6-1, 6-3.

Henry Seungwoo Choi and June Yu then capped the CNMI's very successful last couple of days in Fiji by winning third place in the boys 16 doubles after overcoming Samoa's Darius Carruthers and Titus Paul in a super tiebreaker, 6-0, 6-7, 10-7.

Top seeds Hiva Kelley and Keanau Lei Foc of Tahiti won the age group after beating No. 2 seeds Jonathan Jackson of Guam and Erwin Tayshawn of the Federated States of Micronesia, 7-5, 6-7, 16-14.

Anne Lee and Lina Tsukagoshi, meanwhile, salvaged fifth place in the girls 14 doubles after downing Samoa's Maryallyson Vaai and Nualelai Vaai, 7-5, 5-7, 10-6.

In the girls 14 doubles finals, No. 1 seeds Mia Chang of Tahiti and Raetea Rongo of Cook Islands triumphed over Alisha Kanegai and Ashanti Ligo of Vanuatu, 6-1, 7-5.

Irin Chung and Hoo Wang then settled for fourth place in the girls 16 doubles after dropping a 4-6, 6-1, 10-6 match against Abygael Coeuillet of Vanuatu and Pauline Hyun of Papua New Guinea.

In the finals of the girls 16 doubles, second seeds Mehetia Boosie and Tavero Chung of Tahiti got the better of Fiji's Josephine Debalevu and Sina Izumi, 6-1, 6-2.

In the boys 16 doubles Simon Tang and Cook Islands' Luke Pierre dropped to sixth place after losing to PNG's Phyongil Justus Tollowe and Sugar Ray Hakena, 6-2, 6-2.

CNMI Sports Hall of Famer and national coach Jeff Race is mighty proud of his wards' performance in Fiji.

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Former UFO president now certified basketball referee in Canada

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Former United Filipino Organization president Roland Pamintuan continued his passion for basketball even though he and his family moved to Canada 15 years ago.

"As a certified and duly licensed basketball referee here in British Columbia, Canada, I am officiating games at all levels on high school tournaments the whole year through from junior and senior varsity games," he said.

Pamintuan, who used to own R.P. Construction on Saipan, said so far he has officiated games for Provincials 2A and 3A tournaments and have also officiated games on national tournaments.

"The oldest level I have officiated are on the Kings Men's League Tournament wherein all the players are former university and college varsity players. I have covered Spring and Summer basketball games," said the 55-year-old native of Santa Ana, Pampanga in the Philippines.

As for obtaining his basketball referees certification in Canada, Pamintuan said he attended basketball referees classes at Douglas College sponsored by the British Columbia Basketball Officials Association where he was trained under referees with U.S. NCAA experience.

"I was licensed and certified under NOC 1 by BCBOA and Canada Basketball Officials Commission in October 2010 and remained an active member up to the present," he said.

Pamintuan, who is the husband of the late Bayani Association official Ruby, said he just referees basketball games after work and during his days off.

"I am limiting myself to cover 15 games a week. I have not really officiated a game with notable players as I am short on the level of NCAA officiating. The standards of officiating games between Canada and Saipan are basically the same as FIBA rules are implemented," he said.

As for moving to Canada with his family in 2008, Pamintuan said the primary reason was to be reunited with their son, Roby, who is a former *Saipan Tribune* sports correspondent who was studying in California at that time.

Since then, he and his family have built a pretty good life in the Great White North.

"Every work classification here in Canada has to be cer-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Roland Pamintuan, right, poses with a fellow referee in this file photo from one of the games he officiated in Canada.

PayDayHao rallies vs. Seaweed Vibes, 18-15

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

PayDayHao rallied against Seaweed Vibes, 18-15, in the last inning of their game in the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Slow Pitch Open League last Sunday at the DanDan Softball Field.

By the last inning, Seaweed Vibes had already scored their 15 runs and it was the last chance for PayDayHao to make it or break it.

PayDayHao was down by just two runs and in the blink of an eye tied it up as pitcher Jojo Attao hit a triple and then came home on a double by Ton Leon Guerrero. He then came home after George David's single.

Tindin Leon Guerrero finished it up with a two run home run and PayDayHao took the W.

Dat's It 23, Team Mac 5

Dat's It overpowered Team Mac, 23-5.

In the first inning alone, Dat's It scored 10 runs from two home runs—one by Kaipo Dikito and the other by J.D. Dikito.

Team Mac, on the other hand, could not make contact and only scored three in the second inning.

Team Mac's last two runs were made in the third in-

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LEIGH GASES

Seaweed Vibes pitcher Ikluk Masayos releases a pitch during their game against PayDayHao in the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Slow Pitch Open League last Sunday at the DanDan Softball Field.